



PATIENT SAFETY IS RATED 'POOR'

Report by Richard Guttridge

MENTAL health services across Dudley and Walsall must improve, the health watchdog has ruled following an inspection.

The Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has been rated as 'requiring improvement' overall following a detailed assessment of the three hospitals it runs in the Black Country.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) found in its review that patient safety was of a 'poor standard' and said care plans were not always 'holistic, person centred or recovery focused'.

The regulator said the safety of some staff and patients was 'compromised' as there were not alarm systems in place in all areas.

The Beeches Day Hospital in Walsall did not have an operational alarm system at all at the time of inspection, it was said.

Inspectors also reported 'inconsistencies' in informal patients being able to leave wards, as is their right.

As part of their routine programme of inspections the CQC visited trust premises in early February to look at services.

Areas requiring improvement included records management, supervision, appraisals and training compliance and staff acting in accordance with the Mental Health Act Code of Practice.

The trust employs more than 1,000 people across 29 sites and runs three main units in the two boroughs – Bushey Fields Hospital in Dudley, Bloxwich Hospital and Dorothy Pattison Hospital in Walsall.

Caring

While the trust was told services must improve overall, the CQC described day-to-day practice as caring, responsive and well-led.

Bosses at the trust have vowed to improve in those areas where they were deemed to be not doing enough.

But the trust also pointed to the many positive aspects of the report, including high morale among staff and a 'clear vision and set of values' which put patient safety as its top priority.

Acting chief executive Mark Axcell said: "We welcome the feedback from the CQC and, although we are disappointed with the final rating, the report highlights many areas of good practice and includes some positive feedback from inspectors, staff, patients, carers and stakeholders."

"Quality and safety remains our top priority and we have already taken action to address some of the points raised."

"We will continue to work with our staff, patients, carers and stakeholders to provide the best mental health services to the communities of Dudley and Walsall."

DRONE IT LOOK LOVELY – HIGH FLYING VIDEO IS A HIT



A screen grab from 'Dudley By Drone', a short film to showcase Dudley's beauty from above

Picture: DEK Images

A NEW video offers a stunning bird's eye view of some of the landmarks of Dudley borough.

The fly-through film shot using a drone has captured the imagination of residents.

Dean Russell, the owner of DEK Images who put the film together, said he wanted to show off the beauty of the borough.

Mr Russell said: "I felt the criticism from Piers Morgan was quite unfair. I've been living in Dudley for 12 years and I know there are a number of beautiful places here. But it gets a lot of stick – most of it unjustified."

"So I thought I'd send my drone up in the air and film some of the beauty of Dudley."

He added: "People from around here are very proud of where they come from and this was something to give back to them following all the criticism."

The three-minute 50 second film has already clocked up 25,000 hits on Facebook, with Mr Russell saying it has gone 'mini viral in Dudley'.

The response has been above and beyond what he expected and he says it shows how strongly local residents feel about their area.

Some ex-pats from the borough have even commented and shared the clip from the other side of the world.

"I thought maybe it would get 500 views and a few shares. But the reaction goes to reiterate how people feel proud of their town."

"We've even had people from Australia, Canada and the USA, who used to live in Dudley, who have got in touch."

"People have said it brought tears to their eyes and it makes you feel great that we were able to do this for people."

■ For video, see expressandstar.com

INVESTIGATION

Children wander out of pre-school centre

FOUR young children managed to get out of a pre-school near a busy road after leaving through a gate which supervisors assumed was locked.

Little Legends Pre-School in Rowley Regis is at the centre of an investigation into how the children – around three years old – got out last Wednesday. One was reportedly found in the middle of the busy Dudley Road, although bosses said that had not been confirmed.

Owner Matt Lee closed the pre-school temporarily following the incident and said disciplinary action could follow.

PLANNING

Popular church to get larger building

A CHURCH in the Black Country, which is bucking the trend of dwindling congregations, has revealed plans for a new worship and community centre.

Wall Heath Evangelical Free Church, which is attracting more than 100 worshippers every Sunday, has outgrown its current home in Enville Road.

Leaders now plan to demolish the existing building and replace it with a larger church on the same site, offering a range of facilities, including a 250-seat auditorium.

TRAGEDY

Woman dies as fire rips through house

A WOMAN died when a blaze ripped through her home in Netherton, despite the brave efforts of neighbours to save her.

One woman crawled into the burning house to try to rescue the 67-year-old, named locally as Gillian Howard, after she heard her daughter screaming for help.

Police have now launched an investigation into the fire at the semi-detached house in Spring Road and thanked residents for their 'valiant' attempts to come to the aid of the victim.

Mrs Howard's daughter Nicki was taken to hospital after the fire on Thursday.

● Fatal blaze – see page 18

INSIDE

NEW MAYOR AND MAYORESS



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He always tackles the hot topics head-on

550 sites identified for ‘garden city’

PLANNERS behind a £6 billion ‘garden city’ for the Black Country say they have identified more than 500 sites for around 45,000 new homes.

The ambitious scheme unveiled earlier this year is create a new city stretching from Wolverhampton to Lye, Dudley Port, West Bromwich and Aldridge.

The ‘garden city’ would be the largest in the country and it would be built with open spaces and greenery in mind.

Civic and business leaders attended the MIPIM international property exhibition in the south of France to attract investment for the plans.

Chris Handy, chief executive of Accord Group

and board member of the Black Country Local Enterprise Project, which is behind the plan, said ‘good progress’ had been made.

He told board members at the Black Country LEP the scheme had attracted interest with at least eight small and medium-sized enterprises enquiring about it. These included developers and builders wanting to support the project.

He said: “We have had interest from three types of organisations, one being builders, the other being developers and lastly there has been interest from investors. Around 550 sites have been identified in the Black Country. The sites spread across 30 towns.”

Mr Handy said out of the 45,000 homes to be built work had already started preparing 13,000 to 14,000 properties. The scheme will cover more than 3,700 acres.

Once funding has been secured work will last for a decade. Old industrial areas – brownfield sites – will be targeted.

The development is being led by the Black Country LEP and the Homes and Communities Agency, with the support of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

MIPIM – Le marché international des professionnels de l’immobilier – was a four-day exhibition, conference and networking event in Cannes.

Boy, 14, sold for sex in red light district

NINE men, including a Black Country bus driver, have been convicted of sex offences against a boy who was pimped out in Birmingham’s gay red light district after running away from a children’s home.

Jurors at Warwick Crown Court deliberated for more than 30 hours before convicting defendants from the West Midlands, London and Stoke-on-Trent of offences involving the boy.

Pimp Stephen Kelly had befriended the boy at New Street station when he was just 14, and sold him for sex with other men.

He appeared in the dock at Warwick Crown Court with 11 other men who between them were accused of more than 50 sex offences against the boy in 2009 and 2010.

Bus driver Ian Prestleton, 54, of High Haden Road, Cradley Heath, was found guilty of sexual activity with a child but cleared of rape. Alan Priest, 63, of Mucklow Hill, Halesowen, was convicted of two rapes and one count of sexual activity with a child.

All the convicted men were warned they face custodial sentences when they return to court for sentencing on July 1.

At the end of a three-month trial Kelly, aged 39, of Elm Road, Bourneville, was found guilty of two charges of arranging or facilitating the prostitution of the boy and one of sexual activity in the presence of a child.

Interviewed

Prosecutor Rosina Cottage QC said the victim ran away from a children’s home in December 2009, when he was 14, and was missing for 11 days before being found at Kelly’s home and returned to care.

During that time he had been pimped by Kelly in the Kent Street area of Birmingham. The boy was interviewed by the police at the time but it was only when the investigation was re-opened that he went into full details. As a result, arrests were made.

A tenth defendant, former Special Constable Ronald Potter, 78 from Pipers Lane, Fillongley, near Coventry, was convicted of two indecent assaults committed against another boy in 2001 and 2002 but cleared of rape and sexual activity with a child. Jurors acquitted two other men.

Hugh leads cyclists on charity ride



Black Country cycling legend Hugh Porter with god-daughter Kate Stride (left) and her sister Helen Jackson

ALMOST 600 cyclists lined up alongside sport legend Hugh Porter MBE for a charity bike ride challenge on Sunday.

Starting at Kingswinford Rugby Club, the Round the Wrekin Sportive invited the 580 participants to cycle one of three routes in aid of Compton Hospice – 23 miles, 60 miles or 100 miles long.

The ride began at 8.30am with routes heading into the Shropshire Hills taking in the Long Mynd, Stiperstones and The Wrekin.

Mr Porter, who took part in the 23-mile route through Bobbington, Claverley and Pattingham, said it had been a ‘first class day’.

He said: “It has been fantastic and the weather stayed bright for us despite a few clouds popping in. I only did the short route but more than 100 of us took part in it and moved off in our little groups.

“I wasn’t really worried about the time because my god-daughter and her sister came along and I rode with them and some friends

and had a laugh. It has been a brilliant atmosphere.”

Born in Wolverhampton, Mr Porter won the World Championship title four times and took a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games during his cycling career. He is also honorary patron of Compton Hospice and Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club.

He added: “It means so much to be able to be part of something like this. We raised a lot of money and it is the start of raising even more.”

Scout group mark 40th anniversary with a party

MEMBERS past and present turned out to celebrate the 40th anniversary of a scout group in Dudley.

Around 50 people attended a party to mark the landmark for the Second Lower Gornal Scout group.

The event took place at the Temple Street Memorial Hall on Saturday and saw members past and present celebrate the success of one of the biggest scout troops in the district.

Secretary Mary Woodhall, one of the founders, said: “It was very tough when we first started out in 1976 as we didn’t have much money yet everyone got together and supported each other.

“Throughout the years I have seen hundreds of children grow up through the group and that is really rewarding.

Influential

“A highlight was when we went to an auction and bought our first vehicle in 1978 as that let us progress.”

Mrs Woodhall, aged 72, added: “There has been many influential people that have helped us over the years who will be joining us today.

“There are people who are no longer with us anymore, including my husband Julian, Arthur and Joanne Smith and Geoff Taylor. So we will remember those too.

“Overall the past 40 years have been wonderful as I feel I have had an adventure through the scouts.”

Founding cub leader Peter Wood, aged 79, said: “It will be emotional today to see so many old and new faces too.”

Officer gets lift to make arrest

A GOOD Samaritan helped two PCSOs track down a suspected thief in Dudley.

A man was spotted stealing items from Wilkinsons in Dudley town centre at around 12.20pm last Thursday.

PCSOs John Link and Vicky Rogers chased after the suspect but he managed to get away.

Minutes later an Asian man in a five-door black Astra offered PCSO Link a lift to pursue the thief and, with the driver’s help, the man was tracked down and arrested.

The 24-year-old man was charged with theft and was bailed to appear at Dudley Magistrates Court on June 3.

Dudley Police posted on social media thanking the driver for his help following the incident.

Man dies after an accident in garage

A 64-year-old man has died following an accident at a garage in Cradley on Thursday afternoon.

Police said the man died at the site in James Scott Road. Emergency services were called at 5pm. The Health and Safety Executive is investigating.

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Woman hit by bus is rushed to hospital

A WOMAN suffered serious head injuries after being hit by a bus in Stourbridge.

The woman, thought to be in her 50s, was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham after being hit at the junction of Church Street and Parkfield Road at 2.15pm on Friday.

An ambulance, a community paramedic, a paramedic area support officer and the Midlands Air Ambulance were all called to the scene. The helicopter landed at a nearby school but the victim was eventually taken to hospital by land ambulance.

Ambulance Service spokeswoman Claire Brown said: "The woman had sustained a serious head injury in the collision. The ambulance crews and the doctor worked to stabilise her condition by administering trauma care at the roadside.

"Once immobilised and stable, the woman was taken by land ambulance on blue lights to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The doctor travelled in the ambulance to continue treatment en route.

Meanwhile, a man died after a crash involving a Jaguar car and a lorry near the Black Country Living Museum on Friday night.

Ambulance crews were called to the Birmingham New Road at 10.30pm but nothing could be done to save the 52-year-old, who was a passenger in the car. The driver was treated in hospital for head injuries. Both men were from Slough. The driver of the HGV was not injured in the crash.

Man charged with attempted murder

A DUDLEY man has been charged with attempted murder after a man was shot in the Soho Hill area of Birmingham. Rio Sanchez-Williams appeared at Birmingham Magistrates Court on Friday.

It was in connection with disorder on October 30, which left one man dead and another fighting for his life.

The 27-year-old from Orchard Street was charged with attempted murder of Marvin Duffus, 29, who remains critically ill in hospital nearly five months later.

Derek Junior Myers, 25 from Handsworth, suffered a fatal gunshot wound.

Detective Superintendent Mark Payne appealed for anyone with information to call 101.

Music of the Night for theatre group

MUSIC of the Night, an evening of music from Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's musicals featuring West End singers, is being held in Brierley Hill Civic Hall on July 2 in aid of Stourbridge Side by Side Theatre Company.

I had to watch my business being burgled



CCTV shows one of the thieves in the act

A BUSINESSMAN who called police when he saw a break-in at his firm on CCTV said he was left to watch it unfold after being told officers could not attend until the next day.

Paul Smart watched on a screen at his home near Kidderminster as the theft took place at his Brierley Hill photographic firm.

When he called 999 to report the theft he said he was first told to call the non-emergency number 101 and then told police would not go until the next morning. By the time officers did arrive, the crooks were long gone.

Their crime left Doodah Creative, on The Wallows Industrial Estate in Fens Pool Avenue, out of pocket to the tune of £20,000.

Mr Smart, who lives in Chaddesley Corbett, received a call about the burglary and watched it from a screen in his home, 12 miles away. The burglary lasted 50 minutes.

He said he got through to West Mercia Police when he dialled 999 around 2.30am on Friday and was then told to call West Midlands Police on 101.

He said: "I apparently live in the

West Mercia area. I gave them the address and they said 'ah, you need to call West Midlands Police on 101'. I called 101 and told them the same story. They said they did not have the manpower to do anything.

"Watching someone take your property away like that, while not being able to do anything, it was awful."

West Midlands Police Chief Inspector Gill Davenport said: "We have been made aware that the victim in this case is disappointed with the police response and we are discussing these issues with him."

Brierley Hill's market hall is put up for sale

BRIERLEY Hill's market hall has been put up for sale – leaving the future of the town's indoor market uncertain.

The hall in High Street could sell for as much as £1 million after the family firm which have owned it for generations announced their intention to sell.

Estate agents appointed to oversee its sale said the hall would be sold with the intention that it continues to operate as a market – but ultimately its future would be decided by the new owner.

The indoor market has operated from the hall since 1930 with around 100 stallholders currently selling a range of products. It was described by estate agents Wilks Head & Eve as an 'attractive key asset' which 'forms a thriving centre to the retail scene in Brierley Hill'.

Iain Dewar, from the firm, said: "The family partnership, who have owned the market for many years, have now decided to offer the opportunity of ownership and running of the market hall into new hands.

Operating

"The market hall will be offered for sale as a going concern with the intention that it should continue operating in a similar style to the way it has traded for many years.

"Privately owned and run markets on the scale of Brierley Hill very rarely become available for sale so this opportunity is expected to appeal to a wide number of different parties."

However, when pressed on whether the future of the market was secure, Thomas Greenwell, from the firm, could not rule out the building being used for another purpose in the future.

"It will be sold on the understanding it continues as a market. But it will be up to the purchaser to do with it what they see fit," he said.

Brierley Hill councillor Rachel Harris said she did not believe the sale of the building would put the market under threat.

She said: "Any property owner that comes in would clearly see how much potential there is there. It's an exciting opportunity for a new owner to come in and refurbish the market and keep it as the central focus in the High Street which it has been for many years."

The market hall, as it looks today, was built in 1930. It has been in the hands of the Shapero family since the 1920s. In 2008, the building underwent a £150,000 facelift.

First Muslim mayor for Dudley



The first Muslim Mayor of Dudley Councillor Mohammed Hanif and Mayoress Zabeda Khanam

THE new mayor of Dudley is the first Muslim to serve as the borough's first citizen.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif was voted in as mayor at a full council meeting on Thursday night, succeeding Councillor Steve Walther.

Former deputy mayor Councillor Hanif has been a councillor for nine years for the Lye and Stourbridge North ward.

He has pledged to raise thou-

sands of pounds for charity split between three charities – the Friends of Alfie Johnson, Diabetes UK – Type 2 Together and Dudley CIL. Councillor Hanif said: "It is an enormous honour and a privilege to be Mayor of Dudley and I will serve the residents of Dudley borough to the best of my ability."

"Both the Mayoress and I are looking forward to being ambassadors for the borough and promoting all the good things

that happen here as well as the rich Black Country culture full of industrial heritage. I am also very proud to be the first Muslim mayor of the borough and passionate about working with the local diverse communities."

Councillor Hanif's wife, Zabeda Khanam, was named mayoress at the ceremony in the council chamber. Councillor Dave Tyler was sworn in as deputy mayor with his wife Barbara deputy mayoress.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Confirmation of steel job losses

ALL workers at steel firm Bird Stevens in Quarry Bank have been made redundant, it has been confirmed.

The firm crashed in a cash flow crisis. Darren Brookes, an administrator at Milner Boardman, has confirmed around 50 workers have been laid off.

He said: "The staff had been laid off by the directors. Upon our appointment no funds were available to recommence trading and therefore, unfortunately, all the employees were made redundant. We are currently assisting them to make claims to the Redundancy Payments Office."

Claim figures up as more seek work

DUDLEY saw the highest increase in the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits in the Black Country last month.

It rose by 185 to 5,540 – 2.9 per cent of the working population – and followed a rise of 50 in March.

Unemployment for the wider West Midlands was up 8,000 to 154,000 for January to March despite the national total falling 2,000 to 1.69 million. South Staffs' total remained at 710.

Employment in the West Midlands is at a record high of 2.65m.

Concert with a summer sound

A SUMMER concert will be performed by Coseley Male Voice Choir in Sedgley next weekend.

A Summer's Evening of Song will be presented in St Andrew's Church in Bilston Street on Saturday, June 4.

Special guest and compere for the evening is Tipton poet David Bartley.

Tickets for the concert, which starts at 7.30pm, costs £6 on the door, or are available in advance from choir members or from the secretary on 0121 5200739.

Eyes have it for new Startime Variety show

BLACK Country theatre group Startime Variety is staging a musical show in Halesowen later this summer.

Startime In Your Eyes be at Cornbow Hall in Halesowen from July 13 to 16. The show is based on popular TV series Stars In Your Eyes and is produced by Kirsty Aldridge and Darcy Grainger. The cast will be performing songs from the 1950s to 80s.

Tickets cost £10 for adults plus concessions. Call 07901055685 or visit www.startimevariety.co.uk

Solve clues at Himley

A SCAVENGER hunt takes place on Wednesday, June 1, at Himley Hall and Park, near Dudley.

Clue sheets will be handed out on the day. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



SUNBURN on Monday, soaked on Tuesday, sunburn on Wednesday. God, I love Scotland. The weather varied from blazing sunshine to that dense grey drizzle that the Scots call dreich and on to that persistent precipitation that the Scots call pussen-doon. The great thing about the rain, as one Scot explained, is that it keeps the midges quiet. It is a great land for counting your blessings.

ONE blessing of being a Scot is to be better informed than those terrible people south of the border. The Scots have a separate legal system which means they all know the identity of the world-famous showbiz couple involved in a three-way tryst whose secrecy is so jealously protected in England by our wonderful Supreme Court. "Oh, you mean that business about *****" (asterisks for the benefit of the English), said one local when I started the conversation. "We've known about that for ages. To be honest, I'm not in the least interested in what **** has been up to." This makes the fascinating legal point that what interests the public is not necessarily in the public interest, and even if something is in the public interest, it doesn't mean the public is remotely interested.

SCOTLAND over, we headed back down the M6 in blinding spray. Why is it so many motorists refuse to put on their headlights in such conditions? To be fair, some drivers were very busy texting.



AFTER a week without newspapers I pick up the Daily Mail where pundit Peter Osborne suggests our next prime minister could be the Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt. The silly season starts earlier every year.

MY own view on public interest is that journalists should find out stuff and print it in the newspapers because otherwise the papers would be full of blank pages and nobody would buy them. Go on, call me an intellectual.

DID it not seem strange in the hours following the EgyptAir disaster, that no terrorist organisation claimed responsibility? France is Islamic State's prime target and Egypt its sworn enemy. To make such a high-profile attack on both nations would be a feather in IS's cap. This item may be overtaken by events and it may be that some terror group will produce convincing proof that it did the killing. But we should remember there is one thing far more terrifying than an airliner that falls out of the sky because of terrorism, and that is an airliner that falls out of the sky all by itself.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Lots for children to do at leisure centre

THERE are lots of activities on offer at Dudley Leisure Centre this half term to help keep youngsters entertained.

Children can enjoy 'Bostin Bruce' the fun inflatable aqua pool run, with obstacles and a challenge section with slide from 1.45pm to 2.45pm on Tuesday and Thursday (June 2). Suitable for eight to 15 year olds who can swim 25 metres or more, the ac-

tivity costs £3 per child and juniors can stay in the pool for a swim for just £1 extra afterwards. Activezone offers a day of fun including dance mats, Nintendo Wii, crafts, swimming and team games including football, rounders, basketball and badminton for £20 per day. Activezone will run on Tuesday and June 2 from 9am to 4pm for eight to 14-year-olds.

Juniors under the age of 16 can also get a 50 per cent discount on courts for badminton, squash, 5-a-side football, netball and basketball.

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place, said: "This half term Dudley Council is organising lots of fantastic activities across the borough, including activities at libraries and parks and I would encourage parents to

find out more about them by visiting www.dudley.gov.uk/schoolsout." Pre-booking at reception is recommended for most of the school holiday activities. A 50 per cent discount is available with an Options+ leisure discount card. For more information visit Dudley Leisure Centre, call (01384) 812800 or go to www.dudley.gov.uk/sport

Charity in plea to find homes for youngsters

By Richard Guttridge

A BLACK Country charity is calling on people to offer vulnerable teenagers a home after revealing it has been forced to turn youngsters away following a surge in applications.

Youngsters have been placed with families in Dudley borough as part of the YMCA's Open Door project which aims to prevent them from becoming homeless.

But bosses at the charity said they are now struggling to keep up with the level of demand and need more people to open their doors offer the young people a roof over their heads. Applications have tripled this year compared to the same period 12 months ago. They have received 38 referrals, which has left them struggling to cope with demand.

Hosts

The charity is now looking for new hosts to provide a safe place for youngsters to live. Hosts can come from a variety of different backgrounds, from single people to married couples or families with children who have a spare room available.

Children who are offered a home have to agree to take up education or employment as part of the scheme. Those who agree to take the youngsters receive around £100 a week and can claim £20 in expenses for dinner, bed and breakfast. Full training and support is provided by the YMCA.

The charity will be running a free host preparation course which will allow people who are interested to find out more about the scheme.

Kerry Davies, a host in Dudley, said: "I was a bit nervous at first about becoming a host as I have no children of my own and wasn't sure how well I would relate to them. I am now on my second long-term placement and I've loved every minute"

Email rachael.taylor@ymcabc.org.uk or call 0121 524 1974.

Mayor's last duty is a piece of cake



Mayor Steve Waltho with Debbie Barrett, Denise Hudson, Janet Hutchinson and mayoress Jayne Waltho IN his last official duty, the Mayor of Dudley cut a celebratory cake.

The borough's outgoing civic leader Councillor Steve Waltho helped White House Cancer Support mark the 10th anniversary of its reconstruction group at their base in Ednam Road.

The original group was founded in 1984 by cancer patient Elizabeth Harris.

The off-shoot was launched a decade ago after a chance meeting in a supermarket by breast cancer patients Denise Hudson and Debbie Barratt.

"They had both had reconstruction surgery and felt that women could benefit from a group specifically to support others considering surgery," said Pam Cart-

wright, the group's information officer. The group has since helped dozens of women through breast cancer and subsequent surgery.

Pam said: "It can be quite a daunting process and many women find it very useful to be talked through what it entails.

"They can get information and guidance and find out actually how it feels, what emotions they go through as well as the surgery itself.

"They also find out about what services we can provide, such as various complementary therapies and group support. There's a lot of laughter at the meetings, it's a very happy group."

For further details contact (01384) 231232.

Praise for initiative to tackle hate crime

A PROJECT in Dudley that supports the victims of hate crime has been praised by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Commissioner's Victims Fund provided £14,608 to Summit House's Dudley Advice and Safety Project.

Money was spent on providing the victims of hate crime in the borough with support and advice and guiding them to organisations that can help them recover further. It focuses on homophobia and transphobia.

An exhibition event held at Summit House in North Street, Dudley, celebrated the work and achievements of the scheme.

Proud

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "I was so very proud to speak at this event celebrating the sterling work of Summit House's Dudley Advice and Safety Project. I am proud that my office has been able to fund this.

"Hate crime is a stomach-churning offence and we must do all we can to bring it out of the shadows and into the light so we can tackle it head-on.

"The care of victims is paramount and this scheme helps people get back on their feet by providing 'hate crime champions' to support them throughout their recovery.

"We all have the right to live in peace regardless of our sexuality, gender, race and religion and it sickens me there are still people out there who believe otherwise."

Town has a latte of coffee shops

STOURBRIDGE town centre is now brimming with coffee shops.

Coffee#1 has just opened in the former Dorothy Perkins shop on the High Street, creating up to ten jobs.

There is already a Caffe Nero and Coffee Collective on High Street, Costa round the corner in the Ryemarket, Rimskis just yards away in Crown Lane and Grays and Cafe Express in Market Street. There is also the Mary Stevens Hospice coffee shop at its branch in High Street

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, who represents the Wollaston and Stourbridge Town ward, said the town is now full to the brim with places to grab a latte. He said: "Coffee shops seem to be the thing of the moment. As long as the shops are being occupied then we have to welcome this."

Brewery to run own three-day beer festival

A STOURBRIDGE brewery is holding a three-day summer beer festival at it's own brewery tap next month.

The event is at the Green Duck Beer Company's brewery and tap, the Badelynge Bar, in Rufford Road, from June 16 to 18.

ADVERTISEMENT

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Wartime songs part of forces day

MORE attractions lined up for this year's Armed Forces Day at Himley Hall and Park in Dudley have been revealed.

The free event on Sunday, June 26, from 11am to 5pm, will include the return of popular singing trio the D-Day Darlings. There will be displays by the Air Training Cadets and the Sealed Knot civil war group will be turning back the clock to the 17th century.

The event will include a tribute to the Queen to mark her 90th birthday and surpassing Queen Victoria as Britain's longest reigning monarch.

Fashion show to benefit charity

A FASHION show is being held next month in aid of Wolverhampton-based charity Promise Dreams.

Blakelands Country House, Half-penny Green, will be hosting the event on Wednesday, June 8, from 1pm.

The fashion show will get under way at 1.30pm. Ladies fashion boutique Aristocats, from Penn, will be showcasing designer clothes.

Following the show there will be an afternoon tea, which will have a vintage theme.

A raffle and auction will also take place.

Campaign to help the small charities

DUDLEY Council for Voluntary Services is inviting the charities to get involved in Small Charity Week.

The campaign to put lesser known good causes on the map runs from June 13 to 18 and is run by the Foundation for Social Improvement. It defines small charities as those with an annual turnover of under £1.5 million.

On June 13 they are encouraged to join the #ILoveSmallCharities celebrations on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Lots of displays at the Penn History Fair

PENN History Fair returns to Wolverhampton next month. It takes place at Penn United Reformed Church on Penn Road and will feature 29 exhibitors and a wide range of new displays about Codsall, Penn, Sedgley, Tettenhall, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton and Wombourne.

Admission is free and the event runs from 10am-8pm on June 10 and 9am-4pm the following day.

There will also be demonstrations of rag-rugging and a host of displays.

Bid to trace relatives

THE Black Country coroner is appealing for help in tracing the relatives of a man who has died at his home in Dudley. Donald Ralph, of Ketley Hill Road, in Russells Hall, was aged 89.

Contact Yolanda Rose-Bird at the coroner's office at Jack Judge House, Halesowen Street, Oldbury.

University may look at raising tuition fee

THE University of Wolverhampton says it will consider raising tuition fees in line with Government plans.

University bosses said they support the White Paper that will allow some universities to demand more in tuition fees from students.

The White Paper says the higher the university is rated in terms of its quality of teaching, the more it can charge, in line with inflation. But the measures would also see universities forced to reduce charges if they are ranked badly.

Linking quality of teaching with the amount of money charged has been welcomed by the University of Wolverhampton, which has campuses across the West Midlands.

Geoff Layer, vice-chancellor at the University of Wolverhampton, said: "Fees have been at a fixed level for a number of years and costs are increasing along with student expectations. We will consider raising fees in line with inflation as and when we have the authority to do so."

"I'm pleased the Government's White Paper has choice for students at the heart of its higher education reform strategy."

"We welcome the increased focus on providing high quality courses which can be accessed by a range of people regardless of their background or social status."

"This complements the outcome of our recent QAA Higher Education Review which commended our approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities."

X Factor singer has date in city

A SINGER-songwriter who appeared on the X Factor is to appear in Wolverhampton next week.

Musician Lucy Spraggan appeared on the talent show in 2012, with her audition video viewed 35 million times on YouTube.

She is to perform at the Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Wolverhampton, on June 2. It is part of her UK 'Home' tour ahead of the release of her new album of the same name.

Miss Spraggan was the most Googled musician of 2012 and came off the show to be immediately signed to Columbia Records.

Doors open at 7pm and tickets cost £12. For more information visit www.newhamptonarts.co.uk/lucy-spraggan

Jump The Shark headline at pub

YOUNG Wolverhampton band Jump The Shark have a headline gig at Birmingham pub venue The Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, on Wednesday. The quartet won a BRIT award for up and coming young talent.

Robbers jailed after violent rampage



Tyrone Reid - seven years

ROBBERS who stole more than £1 million in cash, property and vehicles in a violent rampage across the Midlands have been jailed for more than 100 years.

Nine of the gang of 14, who targeted supermarkets and banks, were sentenced at Stafford Crown Court last week, including a Dudley man.

Before the court were Tyrone Reid, 25, of Cromwell Street, Dudley; Mark Hazel, 35, from Leaside Avenue, Rugeley; and Connor Robertson, 25, of Wood End Lane, Lichfield. Six other men from Birmingham and London were sentenced. All had been found guilty after a trial.

The gang's crimes included a robbery at HSBC in Sutton Coldfield where property and cash to the value of £700,000 was stolen and an employee was left needing hospital treatment.

The 14 men were charged in May 2014 with the exception of Robertson and Hazel, who went on the run.

Hazel and Reid continued to carry out violent robberies at Co-ops in Staffordshire. The crime spree came to an end in June 2015 when police arrived during a robbery at Morrisons on Upper Gungate in Tamworth. Hazel was arrested in the Preston area after a robbery in Wales.

Robertson was jailed for 12 years six months for conspiracy to rob, to burglar and to steal. Hazel got eight years for conspiracy to rob and to burglar. Reid was sentenced to seven years for conspiracy to rob and steal. Of the Birmingham men, Aaron Leatham, 24, of Gipsy Lane, was given 15 years six months for conspiracy to rob, to burglar, to steal and conspiracy to burglar. Irfan Bonner, 28, of Faulkners Farm Drive, was jailed for 10 years six months for conspiracy to rob and to steal. Wayne Stokes, 31, of The Ridgeway, was sentenced to 10 years for conspiracy to rob and an additional robbery.

Enterprise zone will transform Waterfront

THE creation of an enterprise zone in Brierley Hill will bring 4,000 jobs and 'change the perception' of the area, says a Black Country business leader.

Business in the Black Country was given a huge boost when proposals to make The Waterfront and parts of neighbouring Harts Hill an enterprise zone were approved as part of the Chancellor's budget in March.

Now members of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership have been hitting the streets to tell people how the massive scheme will transform the area and benefit local residents.

Enterprise zones attempt to aid business growth by offering companies advantages by agreeing to set up there.

Businesses moving in at Brierley Hill will be given the carrot of a business rate-free period for five years to tempt them to move to the complex near the Merry Hill shopping centre.

Long-term aims also include creating 66,000 sq ft of business space to improve what is already on offer to potential tenants.

Civic leaders say the plans also hold the key to bringing the much-heralded Midland Metro extension to Brierley Hill.

Tweet

To mark the publicity campaign, bosses posted a tweet which said: "Brierley Hill Enterprise Zone will create jobs locally and across the whole West Midlands."

Ninder Johal, a board member at the Local Enterprise Partnership, said he was expecting an 'influx of businesses' at the site over the next few years and pointed to the i54 development in Wolverhampton as evidence of how successful enterprise zones can be.

He said: "What we are talking about is 4,000 jobs and the potential for small businesses to find a place where they can grow."

"An influx businesses means we can fully utilise local colleges and universities to up-skill people. When it all comes to fruition there will be a lot of jobs, a lot of skills and the perception of the area will change."

Mr Johal said it was not known when work on delivering the enterprise zone would begin at this stage.

"We have only just managed to get approval. We have had the nod and we will get into the detail and see what we can do."



Halesowen College student Chelsea Rist, aged 16, has been chosen as Miss Earth 2016 during a pageant in Birmingham this month

Chelsea's food for thought at pageant

A 16-YEAR-old Halesowen student has won the coveted title of Miss Earth after she impressed the judges with her campaign against food waste.

Halesowen College animal care student Chelsea Rist, of Hartshorne Street, Bilston, won the Miss Earth 2016 pageant after a weekend of competing at the MacDonalds Burlington Hotel, Birmingham, which saw her complete a catwalk challenge, a cocktail dress round, a evening wear, swimwear and eco-challenge round.

Idea

Chelsea's idea for the eco-challenge was a campaign to prevent people from ditching unwanted frozen goods before they get to the till, which means a product defrosts before staff have a chance to return it to the correct department.

Fundraiser Chelsea, who has already raised £1,200 for different charities since the start of this year, is planning a charity skydive on June 4 and an abseil for charity Acorns on July 2.

The following day she will be doing the 5k colour blast run for Compton Hospice.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Response to tiff sure takes some bleating

WE'VE all been there. Thomas Thwaites was feeling a bit down in the dumps, his job wasn't going as well as he would have liked, and he'd had a tiff with his girlfriend. So he did what any of us would have done. He decided to become a goat. I kid you not.

First of all, he had some prosthetic hooves fitted, and started walking around on all fours. Then he put on a rather strange white hat, which made him look like a Star Wars character. Or one of those bolshie cyclists who go through red traffic lights.

But the 34-year-old didn't have it all his own way. He asked a neuroscientist if he could shut down part of his brain, to make him think like a goat, but for some reason the technology hasn't been perfected yet.

They couldn't alter his digestive system so he could live on raw grass, either, so he had to take a pressure cooker along with him. Which didn't go down terribly well in the goat community.

Anyway, he spent six days living on the Alps, hobbling around on all fours and sleeping in a barn. He's also written a book about it, which you're no doubt itching to read.

He also reckons he made a goat friend, although they all left him behind when they decided to migrate.

National Union of Mountain Goats spokesman Goatee McGoatface was unimpressed.

He said: "He looked nothing like a goat, we just thought he was a strange man having an early mid-life crisis. We would have been more impressed if he had bought a Harley Davidson."

By the way, the Wellcome Trust medical charity gave him £29,000 for his work. You're telling me that is not value for money?

□□□

FILMING has reportedly been taking place around Birmingham for a sequel to action movie Kingsman: The Secret Service, which starred Colin Firth as a dapper security chief.

Having had high hopes for the film, which I thought would be a stylish witty movie along the lines of The Avengers, I have to say it was one of the daftest things I had seen.

But still, it is good to see the West Midlands getting a bit of exposure on the big screen, although it's a shame they didn't choose the Black Country instead.

Gunfights on the big wheel in Dudley, speedboat chases on the cut in Bilston, what's not to like?

What's more, I'm sure they could rustle up some shenanigans at the West Brom Casino.

These movie types have got no imagination, that's the trouble. That's why they always make sequels.



Some of Hannah Reynolds's specially commissioned artwork



Local historian David Robbie at the exhibition launch



A close-up of Hannah Reynolds's exhibits

Tolkien celebration starts year-long tour



JRR Tolkien's Staffordshire Map by Hannah Reynolds

AN exhibition celebrating the author of The Lord of the Rings' links with Staffordshire has begun a year-long tour of the region.

This fascinating insight into the early years of one of the world's best-loved writers, and his time spent in Staffordshire, has already been seen by almost 4,000 visitors during its stay at the Museum of Cannock Chase.

'JRR Tolkien - Soldier and Myth Maker: JRR Tolkien in Staffordshire 1915-1918', organised by The Haywood Society, supported by Staffordshire County Council's libraries and arts service and the Museum of Cannock Chase, and funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund, is at Cannock Library throughout May.

Libraries chief Councillor Ben Adams said it is clear that Staffordshire had a profound

effect on the writer's formative years, and that the county is right to feel proud of those links when his worldwide appeal is probably at its highest.

"The Tolkien in Staffordshire story is one of war, comradeship, creativity, love and loss, and this exhibition offers visitors a rare chance to learn more about the author's stay in Staffordshire and what it was like to be a soldier in the Great War," Councillor Adams added.

Genuine

Highlights of the exhibition include rare photos and original sketches of domestic scenes and landscapes by Tolkien, not seen in Staffordshire since they left with the author in 1918, specially loaned by The Tolkien Estate and Bodleian Library.

One visitor said: "This is a fantastic introduction to how local history can be related to



JRR Tolkien during the Great War

national figures and bring a greater in-depth understanding to local history, in a unique and genuine way.

Another visitor said: "Go and see it, most interesting. Another gem of wisdom learned."

Arriving in Staffordshire on August 17, 1915, JRR Tolkien would begin a connection with Staffordshire that would span the remaining years of the Great War and provide inspiration for the mythology and geography of what we now know as Middle-earth.

The author was stationed first at Whittington Heath, near Lichfield, next at a musketry camp at Newcastle-under-Lyme, then at Rugeley and Brocton Camps on Cannock Chase.

After seeing action during the infamous Battle of the Somme in June 1916, Tolkien spent a period of convalescence, with his new wife Edith, in Great Haywood.

The Tolkiens later briefly took up residence

in a cottage at Gipsy Green, Teddesley Park, near Penkridge. 'JRR Tolkien - Soldier and Myth Maker: JRR Tolkien in Staffordshire 1915-1918' can be visited at Cannock Library, during normal opening hours, until Wednesday, June 1.

The exhibition then moves to Rugeley Library until Saturday, July 2.

Organised

Events have been organised to accompany the exhibition, include a Tolkien talk by local historian and exhibition collaborator David Robbie and a family craft workshop with local artist Hannah Reynolds, whose work features prominently in the exhibition.

For more information, contact Cannock Library, via the Staffordshire County Council contact centre, on 0300 111 8000 or email cannock.library@staffordshire.gov.uk

'JRR Tolkien - Soldier and Myth Maker' tour dates

- 2016**
- CANNOCK LIBRARY – Tuesday 26 April to Wednesday, June 1.
- RUGELEY LIBRARY – Friday, June 3 to Saturday, July 2.
- GREAT HAYWOOD Memorial Hall – Tuesday, July 5 to Sunday, July 10.
- CODSALL LIBRARY – Tuesday, July 12 to Monday, August 22.
- PENKRIDGE LIBRARY – Wednesday, August 24 to Saturday, October 22.
- SHIRE HALL GALLERY – Tuesday, October 25 to Wednesday, November 16.
- LICHFIELD Library – Friday, November 18 to Saturday, January 8, 2017.
- 2017**
- STAFFORD LIBRARY / SP1 foyer – Tuesday, January 10 to Monday, February 27.

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Expansion of EU membership and increasing immigration are killing our country's services

IT seems a majority of people are still undecided on which way to vote in our referendum next month.

I follow politics in all the media and I am certain of which vote will be better for our country and personal future prosperity.

Unfortunately, most people do not watch the news programmes or read the political columns in the newspapers.

The truth is, we are all being shack-

Elderly are being left in dire straits

SO now our hard pressed hospitals are forced into another impossible situation, vulnerable and infirm patients are now having to be evicted from their hospital beds, sometimes late at night in order to free up space for others.

There is little provision in local authority accommodation for these often older people who in many cases can no longer manage on their own.

Yes, we should have known that we would need to offer more facilities both for our older people who have struggled through so much, and also the current baby boomers. But how can we plan for an unknown number of European Union migrants, 800,000 in the last year, all entitled to receive care from our National Health Service?

Is anyone still in any doubt as to which way to vote? As I see it we have no choice.

R WILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

led by hundreds of new laws and petty fogging regulations pouring from the unelected so-called government in Brussels. On top of these are dictates which our government says we are forced to comply with.

The expansion of EU membership and increasing immigration are killing our country's services. The NHS, housing provision and all social care are being destroyed by the pressures of overloading. And now a European Army is being planned.

It is obvious to me that our only sal-

vation is to get out of this failed EU project and start to enjoy the prosperity once again of making our own way in the world.

The British Isles have been successful, both in times of Empire and Commonwealth and could be again.

Let the Midlands lead the way and VOTE OUT for the sake of the young couples, their children and grandchildren and generations to come.

ERIC CASEY
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chron@
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Do not take local newspapers for granted, says MEP

LOCAL newspapers are taken for granted by many readers – but they should never be under-valued, particularly as sadly many are under threat and many others have vanished forever.

This is Local Newspaper Week and it is only right that the fantastic role they play in community life should be highlighted.

Life gets ever harder for newspapers, particularly the weeklies, with decreased staffing levels and local authorities, hospital trusts and emergency services employing press officers to try to ensure only good news is revealed.

With local authorities using a cabinet system the so called transparency they preach can be anything but.

However, determined journalists always seek after the truth on behalf of the communities they serve and that should never be forgotten.

J CARVER
West Midlands UKIP MEP

Not happy with new Yeltz strip

THE heritage and tradition of the Halesowen Town Football Club badge has been decimated from being 'class' to 'crass'.

There is no indication it is a football club badge as FC is not printed on it. It could be a rugby, cricket or whatever club that it represents.

The drawing of St John's Church, which is symbolic with Halesowen Town, is a total disgrace and detrimental to the historic church.

Over the years that the instantly recognisable badge of HTFC has appeared on shirts, scarves and other products, there has never been a problem. Surely with the advanced technology involved for today's media, these two traditional symbols are not a problem.

Who authorised this change of badge with no regard for the supporters voice? Yes, things do have to move on, but this badge change is definitely NOT for the better.

R HOPKINS
Halesowen

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Son left traumatised by knife attack on mother

'IT'S heartbreaking' – the words of a mother whose five-year-old son has been left traumatised after his father attacked her with a knife.

Karl Hughes, of George Close, Dudley, was jailed for 15 years last week for his brutal attack on Toni Bennett, when he slashed her knife with an eight-inch blade.

Miss Bennett and 31-year-old Hughes had been in a long-term relationship of 14 years and had three children together – Jessica, two, Alexander, five, and Josh, 10.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how Hughes' drinking and jealousy had driven a wedge between the pair and they had decided he would move out of the family home.

However, after he had drunk nearly a bottle of vodka on November 21 last year he crept in through an unlocked window and attacked Miss Bennett with a knife, just yards away from their children.

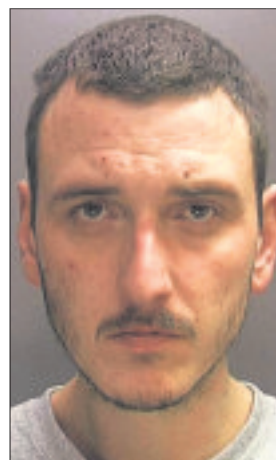
Scars

She has been left with scars to her neck and still has not been able to return to her job as a nursery nurse.

Despite the scars, the most devastating impact for Miss Bennett has been the psychological trauma experienced by her children, who have had to undergo counselling.

Miss Bennett, 29, said: "My little girl is only two, so she's oblivious. But Alex, who is five, is having nightmares. He screams, cries and shouts out 'daddy, stop it' or 'daddy, don't do it'. He is dreaming of his dad attacking him."

"It's heartbreaking for all of us to see him that upset and that distressed at night. All I can do is cuddle him. None of the children should have had to see what happened."



Karl Hughes is serving 15 years in jail after attacking his former partner

Miss Bennett said sitting in the courtroom was an emotional experience, but she needed to do it to be able to move on with her life.

She said: "I was shaking when I was in there but I had to do it for closure for myself, for what he did to me. I wanted to look him in the face and show that he hasn't ruined my life."

During the sentencing, Hughes' lawyer Mr Simon Hanns mentioned his 'remorse' and his desire to apologise. But Miss Bennett said no apology could make up for her former partner's actions.

"When they said that I just shook my head," she said. "He could say sorry a thousand times but I'm not



Toni Bennett shows the scar on her neck after the vicious knife attack

going to forgive him for what he has done and put our three children through. It's awful. He has to face the consequences for his actions."

Hughes admitted attempting to murder Miss Bennett and possession of cannabis.

Mr Hanns said the behaviour 'was out of character' for Hughes, who was 'genuinely remorseful'. He was jailed for 15 years and three months for attempted murder and one month for possession of cannabis, to run concurrently, and ordered to pay £120.

The court heard Hughes had 'frozen' when the pair's elder son, then aged nine, appeared but then shoved the knife into Miss Bennett's shoulder.

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Man died after taking cocaine laced with an anaesthetic

Uber is no threat to us, says taxi leader



Not Uber worried – Shaz Saleem, the Chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association

THE chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association believes drivers have nothing to fear from the arrival of phone app cab business Uber in the Black Country. It has launched services in Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Walsall which see customers download an app, allowing them to order a car directly from the nearest driver. No calls have to be made and no cash changes hands as payments are made online. But Shaz Saleem, a spokesman for Dudley cabbies, said the traditional way of booking a car over the phone would still be valued by customers. “I think it’s all hype at the moment and once that dies down I don’t think it’s going to affect anyone really,” he said. “We have a lot of traditional customers in Dudley and I think elsewhere in the Black Country too. “People like to do their business over the phone because it gives them more confidence, rather than using an app or sending an email and hoping for the best.”

Motorcycle race champion in road safety plea

A CHAMPION motorcycle racer from the Black Country has pleaded with motorists to watch out for riders during the busy summer months. The better weather brings out many more motorcyclists, particularly during weekends and Bank Holidays on the popular routes from the Black Country into rural Shropshire. Michael Rutter, a British motorcycle racer who competes in the National Superstock 1000 Championship, urged car drivers to check for motorcyclists when making manoeuvres in a bid to cut the biker toll on the region’s roads. Mr Rutter, 44, who grew up in Brierley Hill and now lives in Bridgnorth, said: “It is a tragic thing but accidents do happen. The thing for motorcyclists is to be as colourful and bright as possible. Wear day-glo or bright colours and keep your lights on. “For car drivers, until you have ridden a motorcycle you don’t know how car drivers approach you. Car drivers need to look twice, look three times and keep on checking.” Earlier this month a motorcyclist was killed in a collision involving a car near to Rushmere Filling Station, between Bridgnorth and Six Ashes.

A MAN died after a night out when a dodgy batch of cocaine he took was laced with a fatal amount of anaesthetic. Ashley Neil Whittle, 26, of Brierley Hill, was found fitting in his bedroom by his mother after returning home from a night out on October 16 last year. He was rushed to Russells Hall Hospital from his home in White City Road after taking a drug which had been mixed with lignocaine, but it was too late and he was pronounced dead on arrival. Bonita Poole, coroner’s officer, told Black Country Coroner’s Court: “He was taken to Russells Hall Hospital after being found in his bedroom by his mum after a night out. He was pronounced dead at the hospital at around 3.15am. “He had recently broken up with his girlfriend and had started going on nights out a bit more often. Cocaine and alcohol were found in his system from the toxicology reports.”

By Nick Humphreys

His brother Aaron told the court that the electrical engineer had been a bit upset but had never taken drugs on another occasion as far as he was aware. Jolly He said: “He was a jolly person, very funny. He would do anything for you. We were very close. “He seemed a little bit upset but he was just getting on with it, like we all do. He was just going out and having a good time. He had gone to the pub on the Thursday with his friend, they normally had a Thursday meet up. He hadn’t taken drugs before that I know of.” Zafar Siddique, senior coroner for the Black Country, said: “He only had a small amount of cocaine in his blood stream, around one tenth of what you would normally consider a potentially fatal dose. He was twice the drink-drive limit but

didn’t have what you would consider a life-threatening amount in his system. “What was also found in his system was lignocaine, a substance which is normally used as an anaesthetic to put people to sleep. There was 21mg of lignocaine per litre of blood. The usual amount that would be administered to put someone to sleep would be 1 to 5 mg. “Mr Siddique continued: “It is unlikely he took it on it’s own, it is more probable that it would have been mixed with the cocaine. It would have been mixed in to try and boost the cocaine, you never get it in its pure form. That is what will have stopped his heart and stopped him from breathing. He told the family: “This is a tragic waste of a young man’s life. I can’t begin to imagine the grief and devastation that you must be feeling. “Time after time I see the damaging effects on families who have lost a loved one to a drug-related death.”

Campaign to save school seems lost

COSELEY School will close if councillors rubber-stamp recommendations today (Thursday). Thousands of parents battling to save the school have been left devastated by Dudley education chief Councillor Ian Cooper’s comments that there is ‘no alternative’ to closure. The school is set to undergo a ‘phased closure’, if proposals due to go before Dudley Council’s cabinet are passed. Parent Michaela Garbett, of Roseville, urged the council to rethink the move, having collected more than 2,000 signatures on a petition to keep the school open. She argued that closure would disrupt pupils’ education and put a strain on neighbouring schools, with pupils already moving to High Arcal and Dormston schools. Mrs Garbett, who moved her daughter to High Arcal School last month, said parents feared the worse and were feeling ‘very downhearted’. Coseley East Councillor Star Arderton blasted the council comments seeming to seal closure before the formal decision had been made. She added: “I think it’s wholly unfair on all the children.”

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Long-serving hospital workers are honoured

HOSPITAL staff in Dudley who have notched up more than 800 years of service between them have been honoured at a ceremony.

The celebrations shone the spotlight on workers who have reached milestones in their years of service for Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, ranging from 15 to 40 years.

A total of 41 workers, from nurses to office staff at the trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley, were honoured with long service awards by chief operating officer Paul Bytheway.

Staff were presented with a long-service certificate and badge by the trust's chief executive Paula Clark and chairman Jenni Ord.

Staff marking 30 or more years of service also received a piece of locally-made glassware.

Important

Welcoming the recipients and their guests, Ms Clark said how important long-standing members of staff were to the organisation. She added: "We are celebrating true role models who have a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the organisation, which really is invaluable to us. You have chosen to give most, if not all, of your careers to The Dudley Group, contributing so much to our patients over the years. I must thank you all for your dedication and commitment."

Among the winners was Julie Adams, a nurse advisor in the community-based continence team, marking 40 years of service. She said: "I started as a cadet at Wordsley Hospital and I have seen so many changes over the years. I've built such close friendships with my colleagues and I can't see myself working anywhere other than The Dudley Group until I retire."



Chairman Jenni Ord and Chief Executive Paula Clark celebrate with Julie Adams



Paula Clark and Jenni Ord with Sanmar Anthony Aungon who has 15 years' service

Staff nurse Sanmar Anthony Aungon, who came to Dudley from the Philippines, celebrated 15 years.

"Before coming to the UK I had worked in various places in different countries but as soon as I moved to Dudley I knew I wanted to stay," he said. "It's been 15 years since the move and I now have a wife and three children. I've stayed here for so long

because my colleagues and the patients of Dudley are just so nice."

Ms Ord, at her first awards event since taking over as chairman in January, said: "It is obvious to me why all have stayed here so long. It is such a friendly organisation to work in."

After the awards ceremony, recipients were treated to refreshments including a slice of a specially made cake.

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Expansion pays off as sales soar

DW Windows Ltd has gone from strength to strength over the last 12 months since renovating its new premises in Meadow Lane, Coseley, creating one of the largest showrooms in the Midlands and generating 14 new jobs for local people.

The company's turnover has increased by 30 per cent and is well on target to double in the next couple of years.

Proud

The new state-of-the-art showroom and head office has plenty of space to allow future expansion into new areas and of course enables DW Windows Ltd to showcase many of its market leading products.

The showroom has eight conservatories and orangeries, a couple of porches and dozens of windows and doors on display, allowing customers to see, touch and feel before they invest their hardearned money.

Company director Dave Walters states: "It's been the best business decision I have ever made, opening the new place.

"The response from everyone who visits is overwhelming as the design, planning and creation of Meadow Lane is all my own doing and it really makes me proud when people congratulate me on what I have achieved. The increase in business speaks for itself.

"I am not a businessman, I am a window fitter by trade, from Bilston and have succeeded by doing the best job I can and being as honest and reliable as I can be," Dave adds.

"I try to install this work ethic into all of my staff. I have a great team around me now and I couldn't do this without them. All I ask of my fitters is to do the job better than if they were doing it in their own home and this pays off as six out of 10 of the new jobs we do are for repeat customers or recommendations."



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Steve Bull, former England and Wolves legend, opened the new showroom in July last year which was a massive success and since then the phone just hasn't stopped ringing.

They are doing 40-50 quotations per week and since the open day have completed almost 500 new installations ranging from orangeries to single windows or doors. January has been the best on record with a 50 per cent increase in business on January 2015.

DW Windows Ltd are now nearing the end of their first 10 years of trading and are looking forward to the next 10 years.

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Dragon boats make quite a splash at the Great Pool

AN annual dragon boat extravaganza celebrated its 16th anniversary with 24 teams taking part in the colourful race on the lake at Himley Park, near Dudley.

Thousands watched participants from across the Black Country and beyond take to the challenge on the Great Pool.

The event, which is organised by Wolverhampton Rotary Club, has raised almost £320,000 over the years.

It involves a 350 yard race with teams competing in various heats throughout the day.

Richard Green, district governor of Wolverhampton Rotary Club, said: "It takes us a lot of preparation for all to stage this event and plans begin about two months after it finishes each year.

"But to see so many people take

part and raise money for us and many other causes is fantastic. The weather stayed perfect for us."

Each team undertook three runs of the course and the heats were followed by two finals with six boats in each.

Each crew member is asked to raise £50 with half of the money going to their chosen charity and half to those selected by the rotary club.

Peter Hand, secretary, added: "When this first started 16 years ago one of our Rotarians suggested holding a dragon boat event would be a good idea, and since then it has grown and grown. We have 24 entrants this year and in excess of 3,000 people always come out."

"We have some extremely generous people who donate their time and effort to us."



A team from Moog Aerospace prepare for the annual Dragon Boats charity races at Himley Hall's Great Pool

Euro cops join blitz on foreign criminals

MORE than 100 vehicles have been seized in the West Midlands and 39 people arrested in the first few days of a crackdown on crime involving foreign officers.

West Midlands Police have been working with police officers from Romania, Lithuania and Holland as part of Operation Trivium, which targets foreign national offenders in the UK.

The arrests include a 44-year-old Polish man, who was picked up at an address in Lozells and a 62-year-old Czech man who was stopped on Wednesday in a vehicle on the M5. They are wanted for fraud and burglary charges, respectively, in their home countries. The men were detained under European Arrest warrants and will now be deported.

Three Romanian men were arrested southbound on the M5 on suspicion of stealing TVs and wine from a Co-Op store in Staffordshire.

The week-long operation sees officers able to carry out swift intelligence checks on police systems across Europe and provide police patrols in the UK with background information on any foreign suspects they encounter.

Inspectors tell school to improve more quickly

A DUDLEY secondary school has been told its rate of improvement is 'too slow' following a monitoring visit from Ofsted.

Senior leaders and governors at Holly Hall Academy were said to be 'not taking effective action' to tackle areas highlighted for improvement identified in the school's previous inspection in May 2015.

On that occasion the academy was given a grade three rating overall, with all four key areas of leadership and management, pupil behaviour and safety, quality of teaching and achievement said to require improvement.

Following a monitoring visit on April 22, inspectors concluded that the rate of improvement – especially in the quality of teaching – had been 'too slow'.

The report said this was down to 'leaders and governors focusing their energies on addressing the school's financial and staffing issues'.

Challenges

It said that Holly Hall was a school facing 'significant financial challenges' and 'legacy issues of staffing and leadership structures' and called for training in areas where it was most needed.

However, the report notes that the pace of improvement has increased since the arrival of new principal Rob Hatch last September.

It says pupils now receive better feedback, while teaching in science was improving due to 'good subject leadership'.

Inspector Alun Williams wrote: "The principal, supported by an increasingly effective senior leadership team, has brought a clear vision and a determination to improve Holly Hall.

"Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of

By Peter Madeley

the school's strengths and weaknesses and have drawn up detailed and comprehensive improvement plans.

"However, it is too early for many of the actions contained in the plans to have yielded improvement."

The report said that pupils' behaviour was improving, with 'clear new systems' resulting in 'fewer fixed term exclusions and internal isolations'.

"Leaders are aware that more work is needed to eradicate disruption of lessons caused by the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils," it stated.

Attendance at the academy was said to now be close to the national average.

"Leaders know that further improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is a priority," the report added.

Mr Hatch said the report was a 'fair reflection' of work undertaken at the academy.

He added: "Holly Hall is very ambitious to reach the status of 'Good' by the next inspection."

OCD forum is being held by health trust

OBSESSIVE Compulsive Disorder is the topic of a mental health forum organised by Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust next month.

The event on June 16 will focus on the disorder, commonly known as OCD. It takes place from 11am to 2pm at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in Bank Street.

"There are a number of misconceptions about obsessive compulsive disorder which is one reason we have decided to focus our next forum on the topic", said Olivia Clymer, a non-executive director of the Trust. "The anxiety-based condition goes far beyond regular hand washing or checking light switches. It can be so debilitating and disabling that the World Health Organisation has ranked OCD in the top 10 of the most disabling illnesses of any kind."

The event will feature guest speakers and lunch will be provided. To book email communication@dwmh.nhs.uk or call (01384) 325015.



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Tributes as speedway fan dies in caravan fire

TRIBUTES have poured in to a well-known figure on the West Midlands speedway scene who was the victim of a blaze at a caravan park.

Speedway fanatic Clive Molloy died in the fire on St James Caravan Park in New Road. It was caused by an electric blanket.



Victim Clive Molloy

Mr Molloy, believed to be in his early 70s, was called a 'lovely man' by friends and neighbours, who said they were shocked by his sudden death.

Emergency services were called to the caravan park in the early hours of May 16. Fire Investigation Officer Tim Hollingworth said: "This was a tragic accident that may have been avoided. We cannot stress enough the importance of ensuring that your electric blanket is safe to use."

"The consequences of using older or faulty electric blankets can be devastating."

"It is important to get your blanket checked to make sure it is still safe to use - ideally this should be once a year by a competent electrician."

"If in doubt - throw them out. The risks just aren't worth taking."

Tributes have been paid from speedway figures. Mr Molloy was a machine examiner at Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium.

Wolverhampton Speedway issued a statement saying he would be sadly

missed, adding that they were "saddened to learn of the passing of Clive Molloy, an integral part of our back-room team at Monmore Green."

"We would like to pass on our sympathies to Clive's family at this very sad time."

Birmingham Speedway also issued a statement. It said: "Clive spent the majority of his years as machine examiner at Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium but was also a hugely popular figure at Perry Barr too."

"He was a man who loved his speedway, loved praising the riders if they'd



The scene of the caravan blaze in caravan, in which Clive Molloy died

had a good night and would be keen to pick their heads up if they'd had an off night."

"He was an infectious character who would also go out of his way to do a favour for anyone."

"Clive will be sadly missed in the speedway community and we would like to pass on our condolences to his family and close friends."

A friend of Clive's from speedway, Andy Hawthorne, said: "You couldn't not like him, he never forgot a name or a face and all of the riders had time for him."



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Rep remembers much-missed pair



The cast of *Private Lives* together with friends and relatives of Doreen Bastable and Paul Spilsbury. Back row, from left, John Tyler, Janet Grant, Emma Francis, Helen Spragg, Garry Cooper, Chris Stanton, Karen Walker, Robert Spilsbury, Guy Radforth (director). Front row – Alan Bastable, Rosemary Tyler, Margaret and Mark Spilsbury

OLDBURY Rep's 500th main house production, Noel Coward's classic comedy *Private Lives*, ended its run, after it was dedicated to tow of its most long-standing members who passed away recently.

Many performances sold out and there was high critical praise from audiences. The play was dedicated to past chairman, Doreen Bastable, who died in November 2015 and gave 73 years of service to Oldbury Rep along with Paul Spilsbury, whose sudden death in March was a shock to everyone who knew him.

Press officer Alan Wood said: "He

had been a member since the late 70's and played an active role in so many productions both on stage, as a fine actor, and also assisting and costuming plays where he was an exceptional talent. We shall miss them both very much."

Members and friends of both Doreen's and Paul's family were invited to the final performance of the play and after the show met the cast and directors and presented chairman, Chris Smith, with donations amounting to over £1,000 made in their memory.

The troupe's season finale is Patrick Barlow's stage adaptation of *The*

Thirty Nine Steps based on Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film version of the gripping spy drama written by John Buchan, with four actors playing all the roles, from July 9-16.

The rep's film season continues with Meryl Streep in *Suffragette*, tomorrow, Friday; Tom Courtney and Charlotte Rampling in *45 Years* on June 10; and *Dads Army* will be screened on June 24. Alan added: "This promises to be one of our most successful seasons, and Oldbury Rep would like to thank audiences for their continued support of its productions and film shows."

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Lye Disabled Club given £50 cheque

Grange (E) Guild

ACTING chairman Chris Holton presided over the meeting at Grange Court, Stourbridge on Tuesday May 3.

She read the minutes from the previous meeting which were accepted and signed as a true record.

Secretary Jean Williams gave her report and treasurer Jill Attwood gave an up to date financial report. Speaker's secretary Marlene O'Hanlon attended the West Midlands Federation's AGM and reported all details back. All speakers for 2017 had now been booked and dates confirmed.

Marlene also gave an estimated cost of filling a shoe box and members were given the choice of filling the shoe box themselves or donating suitable items on a monthly basis.

The copper collection is still going strong and a cheque for £50 was presented to the Lye Disabled Club. Items for the food bank were still being collected for distribution.

The next meeting of the lunch club will be held on June 14 at the Gate at Bournheath. The evening summer will be held on June 21 at The Brasserie, Kidderminster.

Speaker for the evening Alan Wedge was unfortunately taken ill and David Grayland very kindly stepped in at the last minute. He gave a very interesting talk about the history of Kidderminster Carpets.

Refreshments were served and the raffle was drawn with three lucky ladies winning prizes.

From glory of colour to Black Country fun



Sisters Jessie, left, and Jo Powell, flanked by luncheon club member Sue Fellows

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

CHAIRMAN Mary Jones welcomed 37 members and two visitors to the May meeting. Once again the three-course meal was excellent and the chef and staff were specially thanked for making the Luncheon Club such a pleasure to attend.

The speakers were sisters Jessie and Jo Powell who brought along a beautiful display of antique and modern jewellery, as well as collectables and scarves, which could be purchased following the talk.

They passed around special items of interest explaining their history and names of semi-precious stones. Vice-chairman Ann Rogers had three spaces left for the visit to Himley Hall for afternoon tea on Wednesday, June 15, starting at 2pm.

The next luncheon will be on Friday, June 10, noon for 12.30pm at The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley when the speaker will be Sue Langley on The Glory of Colour. In July members will be in for a treat when David Bartley returns with his Black Country poems and humour.

Sisters show off antique items

Kingswinford Ladies Social Circle

CHAIRMAN Sheila Evans welcomed members and speakers, 2 Sisters, to the May 4 meeting.

A luncheon in September at The March Hare in Worcester was suggested, followed by some retail therapy in the city.

Also proposed was a trip to Trentham Gardens, in November to see the Christmas decorations and enjoy the unusual gifts on sale.

Speakers Jessie and Jo began their presentation with Jessie reading her own poem about vintage years.

They then showed a variety of antique items, including an imitation ivory glove stretcher, jewellery and brooches, made by 'Hollywood' and sold in Woolworths. One brooch was made by Christian Dior and quite valuable.

There was a green, glass vase, containing uranium and a dainty bone china Japanese tea set where the face of a Geisha girl could be seen in the base of the cup.

Three ladies won raffle prizes and there was a jewellery sales table.

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Show is axed after 36 years

THE plug has been pulled on the Sandwell Show, after 36 years, council bosses have announced.

Falling visitor numbers have been partly blamed for shelving the free event, which attracted more than 100,000 at its height.

Sandwell Council said it also believed the two-day show held at Sandwell Valley over the August bank holiday weekend had become 'outdated'.

Bosses are planning to replace it with a month-long summer festival at the beauty spot in August.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for highways and the environment, Councillor Maria Crompton said it was now looking for a firm to help stage the replacement event.

"We've been plagued by bad weather over the August bank holiday weekend for the past three years which has had an impact on the crowds," she said.

Wolverhampton has also axed its City Show.

Universities unite to work with new authority on skills

THREE universities are joining forces to compete with London when the West Midlands Combined Authority is launched.

The University of Wolverhampton, Birmingham City University and Coventry University are launching the West Midlands Combined Universities (WMCU) initiative, bringing together their applied research and training expertise.

Bosses say the link-up of three institutions will provide the Combined Authority with a powerful resource to meet ambitious plans around skills, job opportunities and productivity – including the creation of more than 500,000

jobs by 2030 and a targeted rate of growth to match that of the London economy.

The WMCU will also support the devolved authority's desire to tackle a significant shortage of skills in the region, particularly in the health and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Unemployment

The move is part of a concerted bid to address unemployment – currently 9.3 per cent – across the region's seven metropolitan authorities.

The announcement, which comes ahead of the official launch of the WMCA next month, gives a major boost to the region's devolution deal and signals a significant development in the way higher education institutions might contribute to the West Midlands economy.

Leaders of the three universities anticipate that the WMCU will be able to fill predicted nursing shortages in the region by offering tailored courses and close the skills gap in the automotive sector by working with local businesses to provide higher apprenticeships alongside existing degree programmes.

They also said they would be able to help retrain for skills required by new technologies.

Professor Geoff Layer, vice-chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, said: "Our ambition through our collaboration is to build on existing assets across all three universities, focusing on product leadership and priority industries for the region including health care, construction, digital and creative and professional services."

Paving way for business awards

THE Black Country Chamber of Commerce Awards 2016 have been officially launched, celebrating the best in business from across the region.

Awards Writing Workshops will take place in the run up to the deadline for applications. The workshops aim to provide some essential tips and coaching in preparation for entry.

The first was led by Andrea Childs, managing director of Klick Business Solutions. She said: "Gaining professional recognition through awards is critical to ensure you are celebrating the great things your organisations are doing."

The second takes place on June 9, led by Peter Starr, director of Chilli Pepper Development.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner 2016 is on November 18 at Wolverhampton Racecourse.

Nature haven at church



Preservation group chairman Deb Brownlee outside St John's Church at Kates Hill

A NEW nature reserve is being set up on former allotment land at the back of a Grade II-listed church in Dudley.

Volunteers from the St John's Church Preservation Group are working to clear the three acre site so it can be opened up to the public.

People were due to get an insight into the project last week when the outgoing Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho was lead a walk around the site.

The scheme comes as the group continues its efforts to re-open the church in Kates Hill, which closed in 2002.

Chairman Deb Brownlee said: "We want St John's to be the most amazing resource for local people and visitors, and a place to learn about history and nature preservation."

"The nature reserve is nowhere near finished, but we can now show people the outline paths, and we are honoured that the Mayor of Dudley has agreed to lead the first ever public walk round on his very last day of being Mayor."

"The nature reserve land is owned by Dudley Council, and illegal fly-tipping has been a massive problem for decades."

"We have been gradually clearing it and representatives from Dudley Council have been very helpful in assisting us to develop the nature reserve concept, which will protect the land from property development, help meet the borough strategy of providing more green spaces, and provide a safe haven for the wildlife. Over 40 species of birds reside on the land already."

She added that the project would mean more fencing and CCTV cameras to protect the 'peaceful green haven'.

Black artists' work comes to art gallery

AN art movement which started in Wolverhampton and has works on show in the Tate Gallery is celebrated at an exhibition opening at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Black Art in Focus brings together paintings and prints by contemporary black British artists from the gallery's existing collection as well as artwork recently acquired thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Britain's black art movement had its roots in Wolverhampton more than 30 years ago and has since gone on to influence artists across the UK. The movement includes iconic works by such acclaimed artists as Tam Joseph and Turner Prize winner Chris Ofili.

Keith Piper, Claudette Johnson and Donald Rodney will feature in the show at the Lichfield Street gallery.

Black Art in Focus opens at Wolverhampton Art Gallery on Saturday and runs until July 9.

Glory Glory football ale

A BLACK Country brewery is producing a special ale to mark this summer's European Football Championships.

Holden's Brewery's Glory Glory celebrates England, Wales and Northern Ireland all taking part in this summer's tournament in France.

The 4.3 per cent limited edition amber ale will be on sale from the Woodsetton brewery's pubs from June 6 to July 8, coinciding with the tournament.

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FOCUS ON NETHERTON AREA

Neighbours tried to save woman from house blaze

THE WH Smith branch in Merry Hill shopping centre is to stay open after a deal was agreed to save it.

The chain had announced the shop would close during June but bosses have now announced it will remain.

It means that jobs that had been under threat at the store have been saved.

The branch has been part of the complex since 1989 but its days appeared to be numbered when signs were put up announcing it was to close on June 9.

It would have meant the next nearest WH Smith would have been at the Ryemarket in Stourbridge.

Bosses at the company said they had 'reached an agreement with the landlord' to stay put.

The news comes as a boost to Merry Hill as it is also facing losing its BHS store.

Homes on old factory land

TWENTY-FOUR homes will be built on former industrial land in Netherton, after the scheme was given the go-ahead by Dudley Council planners.

Proposals for the Bradley Chain and Engineering Company site in Quarry Road have been approved.

An existing house and disused industrial building will be demolished to make way for the homes. An officer's report said the 'positive' development would help housing growth.

NEIGHBOURS have spoken of their horror after a woman died when a blaze ripped through a house in Netherton.

Neighbours tried to save the 67-year-old, named locally as Gillian Howard. Police have launched an investigation into her death at the house in Spring Road and thanked residents for their 'valiant' attempts to come to her aid.

Mrs Howard's daughter Nicki was taken to hospital after the fire on Thursday, which left the semi-detached property a charred wreck.

The pensioner's body was found in the front lounge of the house after a fire tore through the building. Mrs Howard was confirmed dead at the scene.

Miss Howard, aged 36, was taken to Dudley's Russells Hall hospital and treated for smoke inhalation and shock.

Screams

Police have appealed for witnesses to the blaze to come forward.

Neighbour Jackie Tanner, 47, heard screams on Thursday morning and rushed outside in her dressing gown to try to help.

Doctor's receptionist Mrs Tanner, a mother of one, said: "I was in bed and then heard a woman screaming that her mum was in the house which was on fire."

"I could see her on the floor in the living room. I opened the door and she was

lying there. I had to crawl because the smoke and heat was that bad.

"Then the curtains came down and the next thing I know I just got blown out of the house somehow."

"I'm so sorry that she died. It's terrible."

A second woman was treated for smoke inhalation. A third woman, believed to be a neighbour, was uninjured.

Sgt Richard Narrowmore, from Dudley police, said: "I would like to commend the neighbours in Spring Road who valiantly tried to save this woman."

"We are at the very early stages of our investigation and we continue to appeal to anyone who was in the area and may have witnessed something to come forward."



The scene of the fatal fire in Spring Road, Netherton

Picture courtesy of West Midlands Fire Service

Offices now apartments are unveiled

A MULTI-MILLION scheme to convert the former Point North office block at The Waterfront into apartments has been completed.

The apartments should breathe life into the once busy area after a number of businesses, clubs and bars closed, which has left 40 per cent of the site vacant.

The Landmark, which it is now called, has 181 luxury apartments and could have up to 300 people living inside.

Further long-term plans include creating 66,000 sq ft of new business space at the site, which is at the centre of a new enterprise zone.

It is one of Birmingham contractor Colmore Tang Construction's key sites.

Wolves legend Steve Bull has bought one of the six penthouse apartments, priced around £124,950.

No decision on post office

NO decision has been about the sale of a post office in Dudley which looked set expand its services to seven days under new management, the current owners have said.

Bosses at the branch in Saltwells Road, Netherton, have been in discussions about transferring the service to new management with the aim of keeping the store open longer. But the owners have confirmed a final decision on its future has yet been made.

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Hitch a ride with Catfish and co

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

CATFISH and the **Bottle-**
men seem to confirm my
suspicion that scruffy leath-
er-jacketed youths from un-
fashionable towns make the
best rock music.

Second album **The Ride**, the first
with Johnny Bond replacing Billy Bibby
on guitar, sees the Llandudno quartet
more than live up to the promise of
their hit debut album **The Balcony**.

Frontman Ryan Evan 'Van' McCann
sings 'I don't think things through' on
swaggering melodic rocker 7 which
kicks things off for a series of songs
about drink-fuelled love affairs, broken
hearts and jealousy.

Highlights include pounding new single
Twice with its incendiary guitar, fu-
ture fans' favourite Heathrow and mon-
ster hit-in-waiting Oxygen (imagine
Thin Lizzy playing 10CC's Rubber Bul-
lets, if you're old enough). Songs about
teenage (or early 20s) kicks haven't
sounded so good in a long time.

Corinne Bailey Rae returns six
years on from her grief-stricken album
The Sea, recorded after her husband's
death, and ten years since she had a
major hit with the bright and breezy **Put
Your Records On**.

New album **The Heart Speaks In
Whispers** is a sophisticated set, as
much influenced by jazz as soul with
subtle use of electronics.

In songs such as **Tell Me** there is a
sense of optimism, tempered by expe-
rience and a certain wistfulness. High-
lights include the ballad **Hey I Won't
Break Your Heart**, potent opener **The
Skies Will Break** and the lithe funky
Green Aphrodisiac. Her soulful voice
really shines on the gentle **Do You Ever**



Catfish and the Bottlemen more than live up to the promise of **The Balcony**

Think Of Me, the urbane Horse Print
Dress, poignant Caramel and jazzy
closer Night.

The Yorkshire-born songstress will
be special guest of Motown legend
Lionel Richie at Birmingham's Barclay-
card Arena on Tuesday, June 7.

Former lead singer of Sheffield band
The Long Blondes, **Kate Jackson**, is
back with a solo album, **British Road
Movies**. The artist, singer and song-
writer has found a perfect collaborator
in former Suede guitarist Bernard But-
ler, who has helped create the musical
moods and guitar licks to complement
her hit-the-road lust for life.

Highlights include the Go-Gos meet
a-Ha synth-driven 80s feel of **The End
of Reason**, escapist anthem **Wonder
Feeling** and the reverb drenched
60s-flavoured **Lie to Me**.

Guitarist Butler also features on **Fever
Dream**, the third solo album from
Ben Watt, former partner with Tracey
Thorn in **Everything But The Girl**. EBTG
specialised in chilled electronica, Watt
prefers a more stripped back approach,
returning to the kind of classic sing-
er-songwriter material that the likes of

Justin Hayward, Al Stewart and Elton
John specialised in during the 1970s.
It suits his mellow vocals and his songs
are eloquent, enhanced by Butler's
slightly distorted guitar motifs. Stand-
outs include the melancholy beauty of
Bricks And Wood, his duet with Marisa
Nadler on **New Year Of Grace**, the
summery, almost Chris Rea-like **Faces
Of My Friends**, whilst **Running With
The Front Runners** is the closest to the
chilled grooves of EBTG.

Watt is in concert at the Hare and
Hounds, Kings Heath, on June 10.

Tragedy and hard luck stories have
long been the raw diet of country mu-
sic and never sound better than when
the singer has actually lived the drama.
So it is that **Margo Price**, who has
overcome family tragedy and financial
problems (she had to pawn her wed-
ding ring to pay for her first recording
sessions), brings a sense of authentic-
ity as well as a classic country voice to
her debut **Midwest Farmer's Daugh-
ter**. But she never resorts to self-pity,
always feisty on an album which en-
compasses ballads, honky tonk, blues
and rockabilly.

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Home gig – Page 23

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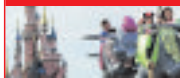


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 Visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk

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Gordon Lightfoot
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 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
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Clare Maguire
 Thu at 8pm,
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An Evening With The Dreamers
 Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
 Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.
 Call 01543 578762

We've Only Just Begun A Celebration Of The Carpenters
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 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
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Phoenix Rising
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 The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
 Call 01902 401211

Joanna Gruesome
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 Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
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BC Camplight
 Sun at 7.30pm - 10pm,
 Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
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The Bootleg Shadows
 Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
 Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE.
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Dr. Feelgood & Eddie And The Hotrods
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Wingspan: Tribute To Paul McCartney And The Beatles
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Blake
 Tonight at 7.30pm,
 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.
 Call 01527 577330

Quill
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 Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, SY3 8FT.
 Call 01743 281281

The Hunna



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Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath
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Dizzy Lizzy: Thin Lizzy Tribute
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 The RoadHouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
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Joey Devries
 Tomorrow at 6.30pm
 O2 Institute 3, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DE
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Beverley Knight
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 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
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Ian Siegal & Jimbo Mathus
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 The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
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Bonnie Raitt
 Mon at 7.30pm,
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
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Maxwell's Quandri
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 Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
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Chris Bevington
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 The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
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Jazzlines Free gigs: Martin Trotman
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Tom: A Story Of Tom Jones



Wednesday to Saturday
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 From miners' clubs in the valleys to Las Vegas, the story of the Welsh singer featuring hits from Delilah to Sex Bomb, with Kit Orton (pictured) as Jones the Voice.
 Visit www.atgtickets.com

Holiday vs Love The Life
 Sun - Mon at 9pm - 3am,
 Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
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Young Culture
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Elrow Birmingham: The Trip
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The Best In Live Stand-up Comedy
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Aurie Styla: Working... Hardly!
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Comedy In The Met
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BalletBoyz: Life
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Cats: The Musical
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 Call 0844 338 5000

Made In Dagenham: West Bromwich Operatic Society
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Tell Me On A Sunday
 Thu at 7.30pm, £24.50 - £28.50
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Greg Foot Presents Caution: Safety Goggles Required
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 Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.
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Pasha Kovalev: It's All About You
 Tonight at 7.30pm,
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Jackie The Musical
 Tonight at 7.30pm, Tomorrow at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
 New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
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Shadowlands
 Tue at 7pm, Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm,
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
 Call 0121 236 4455

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Cats lovers will be feline groovy

ANDREW Lloyd Webber's record-breaking 2015 Olivier award nominated musical Cats returns to Birmingham direct from its sell-out seasons at the London Palladium for one week only.

Adapted from TS Eliot's 'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats', Cats returned to the West End in December last year, with a sell-out run at the London Palladium, reuniting the original creative team - director Trevor Nunn, associate director and choreographer Gillian Lynne, designer John Napier and composer Lloyd Webber.

Cats is a dazzling blend of fantasy, drama and romance about one special night of the year when all the Jellicle cats meet at the Jellicle Ball where their wise leader, Old Deuteronomy, will announce which of them will be reborn.

The show, which first opened in the West End in 1981, is full of amazing choreography and memorable songs, including the timeless Memory, sung by glamour cat fallen on hard times Grizabella.

Recently in the West End Grizabella was played by Wolverhampton's Beverley Knight and at Birmingham Hippodrome, from Monday to Saturday, the role is due to be played by Filipino actress and singer, Joanna Ampil, former star of Miss Saigon.



Victoria the White Cat in a scene from Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cats

Bev's back in Soulville

WOLVERHAMPTON-BORN Queen of UK Soul Beverley Knight is looking forward to a 'sweaty, up-tempo' homecoming gig in Wolverhampton tonight (Thursday) as part of her 2016 UK tour, which also includes a concert in Birmingham next week.

The star, who recently turned 43, can't wait to perform at the Slade Rooms and admitted it would have been 'ridiculous' for her not to take to the stage in front of her biggest fans.

She will be entertaining with songs from her new album, Soulville, which she recorded in Memphis and is released on June 10, as well as her hits and songs from the West End shows she has appeared in.

The former Woodfield and Highfields pupil said: "It was going to do my head in, not doing a show in Wolverhampton. It would have been the first time ever on one of my tours that I didn't play there, which would have been ridiculous.

"It's just been finding somewhere to play with the Civic Hall being closed for refurbishments. But the Slade Rooms became available. I'm really looking forward to it.

"It's a smaller venue so it's going to be more of a sweaty club, up-tempo gig. That's what I'm planning for it. It'll be a mixture of songs from the new album and older ones, as well as a bit of what I've been up to in the West End."

She added: "It's always a good excuse to go home and see everybody as well. People are so supportive back home. I try to get back to Wolverhampton as much as I can, I've got a big family and there's normally someone's birthday, so that's a good excuse.

"It's a bit more difficult when you're in West End shows to get the time away, so I'm making the most of not being in a show at the moment."

The soul legend, who was made an MBE for her creative and charity work in 2007, is looking forward to giving Wolverhampton a sneak peek of material from her new album, her first in four years. She added: "I'm just so thrilled with it, it's a proper soul experience."

Beverley plays the Symphony Hall on Thursday, June 2.



'It's going to be a sweaty club, up-tempo gig'

Mothers reunion celebrates venue

BACK in the late 1960s the hippest rock venue in Brum was found above a furniture store on Erdington High Street.

Among the acts that performed, and sometimes recorded, at Mothers were Pink Floyd, The Who (performing Tommy) and a local band called Black Sabbath, who soon became known for their flamboyant frontman.

After some 400 gigs, the club closed in 1971, and 45 years on Mothers veterans the Steve Gibbons Band, Terry Reid, Edgar Broughton and Del Bromham from Stray are celebrating the venue at the Robin 2 in Bilston on Saturday night.

Tickets are £21.50 (£19.50 advance).

Shadowlands play at Birmingham Rep

THE critically-acclaimed production of William Nicholson's moving play, Shadowlands, comes to Birmingham Repertory Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday (June 4).

It examines the private life of celebrated author CS Lewis, author of the Narnia stories, and his affair with feisty American poet, Joy Davidman.

The cast of Shadowlands is led by Stephen Boxer (Humans, The Iron Lady, Doctors) as CS Lewis, Denis Lill (The Royal, Only Fools And Horses) as Major WH Lewis and Amanda Ryan (Shameless) as Joy Davidman. Tickets cost from £13.50 to £35, call 0121 236 4455.

Eighth stage for Slam Dunk Festival

ROCK festival Slam Dunk has added an eighth stage for its tenth anniversary, being held in the Genting Arena at Birmingham NEC on Sunday.

The extra stage will highlight solo and acoustic acts and will be headlined by Bryce Avary of The Rocket Summer.

The festival, which has moved from Wolverhampton to Brum due to the refurbishment of the Civic Hall, will feature more than 45 acts - including from Las Vegas headliners Panic! at the Disco, 2 Tone legends The Beat, Of Mice & Men, New Found Glory, The Story So Far, Qemists, Zebrahead, Every Time I Die, and Mallory Knox.

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CHOICE



Luke Pasqualino

The Musketeers (BBC1, 9.30pm)
New series. In war-torn France, the battle-scarred swordsmen reunite to rescue orphans from brutal mercenary Lucien Grimaud. Meanwhile, a sinister new battle awaits in the form of corrupt governor Feron. Matthew McNulty and Rupert Everett join the cast, with Luke Pasqualino, Tom Burke, Howard Charles and Santiago Cabrera starring as d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis. Based on the characters created by Alexandre Dumas.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live.** **11.30 Mary Berry Cooks.** (R) **12.00 BBC News: Weather.** **12.10 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **1.00 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **1.30 Gymnastics: Men's European Championships.** Live coverage of the men's team competition. **4.15 Escape to the Country.** (R) **5.00 Can't Touch This.** Obstacle course game show, presented by Zoe Ball and Ashley Banjo. **5.50 BBC News.**
6.00 Regional Programme.
6.10 Pointless Celebrities. A "law and order" special of the quiz, with Helen Fraser, Victoria Alcock, Roberta Taylor, Chris Ellison, Arthur Bostrom, Mina Anwar, Dominic Littlewood and Matt Allwright. Last in the series.
7.00 Michael McIntyre's Big Show. The comedian hosts his final evening of entertainment and introduces music by All Saints, while Alex Jones hands over her mobile phone in Celebrity Send To All. Last in the series.
7.50 The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winton joins five contestants answer questions to scoop a big cash prize. Includes the National Lottery draws with a performance by Samantha Barks.
8.40 Casualty. Big Mac struggles to hide the toll his addiction is taking and steals some painkillers, while Robyn is determined to bring David out of his shell.
9.30 The Musketeers. New series. The battle-scarred swordsmen reunite to rescue orphans from a brutal mercenary. Matthew McNulty and Rupert Everett join the cast.
10.30 BBC News: Weather. National Lottery Update.
10.50 Peter Kay's Comedy Shuffle. A final selection from the career of the comedian, actor, writer and director, featuring Peter appearing with Catherine Tate's Nan as well as his observations on family weddings and more of Max and Paddy's misadventures. Last in the series. (R)
11.20 Live at the Apollo. Greg Davies hosts another session of stand-up at Hammersmith Apollo in west London, warming up the audience for Hal Crutenden and Simon Evans. (R)
12.05 Film: The Tuxedo. (2002) **1.40 Weather for the Week Ahead.** **1.45 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.30 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **7.30 Film: Death of a Scoundrel.** (1956) **9.25 Film: The Glass Bottom Boat.** (1966) **11.10 Natural World.** (R) **12.00 The Hairy Bikers: Everyday Gourmets.** (R) **1.00 Film: Father of the Bride.** (1950) Comedy, starring Spencer Tracy and Elizabeth Taylor. **2.30 Flog It!** (R) **3.20 The Great British Sewing Bee.** (R) **4.20 The Great British Sewing Bee.** (R) **5.20 This Week's World.**
6.00 Golf: PGA Highlights. Action from the BMW PGA Championship, the European Tour event taking place on the West Course at the Wentworth Club in Surrey. South Korea's An Byeong-hun triumphed here in 2015, with his overall score of 21-under-par ensuring he finished five strokes clear of his nearest competitors.
7.00 Nick Baker's Wild West. The naturalist explores the wildlife-rich wetlands of south-west England, including two stunning Somerset reserves. Last in the series. Postponed from May 20.
7.30 RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2016. Monty Don and Joe Swift present a look back at the highlights of the past week at the horticultural showcase.
8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring and the platoon are asked to provide a guard of honour for a royal train carrying George VI that is passing through Walmington-on-Sea, but another locomotive confounds their plans. Classic comedy first broadcast in 1973, starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Alec Dunn. (R)
9.00 The Secret of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Conductor John Eliot Gardiner looks at the story behind the famous piece of music, the opening notes of which are among the most recognisable in history. Gardiner investigates what the German composer was trying to express when he wrote the piece, and looks at the exciting and dangerous times that shaped Beethoven both personally and creatively.
10.30 Artsnight. (R)
11.00 Film: The Prestige. (2006) Two Victorian magicians become bitter rivals as one becomes obsessed with the secret to the other's greatest illusion. Mystery thriller, starring Hugh Jackman.
1.00 Film: The Disappearance of Alice Creed. (2009) **2.35 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan.** (R) **6.45 Dino Dan.** (R) **7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story.** (R) **7.15 Super 4.** (R) **7.30 Nerds & Monsters.** (R) **7.45 The Tom & Jerry Show.** (R) **8.00 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **8.25 ITV News.** **8.30 Weekend.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **10.20 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** **12.05 ITV News: Weather.** **12.10 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **1.15 Film: Murder on the Orient Express.** (1974) Agatha Christie mystery, starring Albert Finney. **3.50 Film: Kindergarten Cop.** (1990) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.
6.00 Regional Programme: Weather.
6.10 ITV News: Weather.
6.25 Bang on the Money. Rickie Haywood-Williams and Melvin Odom host the game show in which two teams of friends must battle it out to hit a specific target number "bang on" in a series of physical and mental challenges. At the end of the contest, the most successful group could win up to £40,000. This week's teams are the Suits in the City from London and Team Samanda from the Wirral.
7.30 Britain's Got Talent: Live Final. After weeks of tough auditions and five fiercely competitive semi-finals, the national talent search comes to a close as the remaining acts perform one last time. The hopefuls all have one simple aim - to win a coveted slot at this year's Royal Variety Performance and get their hands on the £250,000 cash prize. All they have to do is impress the voting public, as the opinions of judges Simon Cowell, David Walliams, Amanda Holden and Alesha Dixon count for nothing - who wins is entirely down to the viewers at home. Plus, to celebrate 10 series of the show, tonight also sees a special "best of" performance orchestrated by Diversity's Ashley Banjo. Presented by Ant and Dec. Last in the series.
10.00 Let's Do It: A Tribute to Victoria Wood. Celebration of the late comedian's work. (R)
11.00 ITV News: Weather.
11.15 UEFA Champions League Final Highlights. Real Madrid v Atletico Madrid.
12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Cycling: Velothon Wales. **7.05 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge.** **7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.30 Super 4.** (R) **7.30 Nerds & Monsters.** (R) **7.45 The Tom & Jerry Show.** (R) **8.00 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **8.25 ITV News.** **8.30 Weekend.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **10.20 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** **12.05 ITV News: Weather.** **12.10 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **1.15 Film: Murder on the Orient Express.** (1974) Agatha Christie mystery, starring Albert Finney. **3.50 Film: Kindergarten Cop.** (1990) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.
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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Class of 92, ITV, 10.15pm

Documentary telling the story of six of Manchester United's most successful players - David Beckham, Nicky Butt, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes and Phil and Gary Neville. The film follows their rise from playing for the club's youth team to forming part of a squad that would win the European Cup. (2013)

TUESDAY

Columbo: Any Old Port in a Storm, ITV, 11.10pm

A vineyard owner's financial security is jeopardised when his playboy younger brother threatens to sell the family winery. He resorts to killing his sibling and rigging the death scene to look like a scuba-diving accident. However, the crumpled cop sees through the ruse and in the process reveals he is something of a wine buff himself. Detective drama, with Peter Falk, Donald Pleasence and Julie Harris. (1973)



Fright Night, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

WEDNESDAY

Stranger in the House, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Premiere. A young woman suspects her scheming step-mother of murdering her father to get her hands on her inheritance. Thriller, starring Emmanuelle Vaugier and Jordana Lary. (2016)

THURSDAY

Le Week-End, Channel 4, 9pm

A couple decide to celebrate their 30th anniversary in Paris, where they spent their honeymoon, in the hope that returning to the site of happier times will revive the failing relationship. The holiday leads to an encounter with a prosperous old friend, who invites them to a dinner party that changes their outlook on life. Romantic comedy drama, starring Jim Broadbent, Lindsay Duncan and Jeff Goldblum. (2013)

FRIDAY

Fright Night, BBC1, 11.55pm

A teenager realises his new neighbour is a vampire, but cannot convince anyone of the danger they are in. He turns to a foul-mouthed magician with a horror-themed Las Vegas show to help him slay the bloodsucker before he murders the entire neighbourhood. Comedy horror remake, with Anton Yelchin and Colin Farrell. (2011)

Looking at the benefits of the Welfare system

Are single mothers receiving benefits living the life of Riley? Or is it more a case of living on the breadline?

Single mum-of-two Myleene Klass is turning investigator for this new documentary in which she hopes to find out what parents on benefits are spending their cash on.

Myleene is never far from the public eye as a TV presenter and performer, but sees being one of Britain's two million single parents as her most important job.

However, she struggles with a stigma she feels is attached to the single-mother status and looks to uncover why single mums feel like they get such a hard time.

"When I read the headlines about single mums on benefits, living the high life, refusing to work, it makes me, like everyone else, furious.

"These stories do nothing to help the image of single parents everywhere, leaving [us] all feeling tarred with the same brush.

"So I want to find out the truth behind the headlines."

Myleene starts her journey by speaking to 'Welfare Queen' Marie Buchan, an unemployed single mother of eight children who caused outrage when she publicly declared her £26,000 benefits weren't enough.

Marie says getting the benefits is a simple process: "You obviously have a baby, you send off the application form, birth certificate, they assess it and then you've got your money in your account. It is very easy."

Next it's onto Margate, where Myleene meets teen mum Becky.

She says: "I got quite a lot of negative comments from everyone. They just called me dirty, disgusting.

"There was one incident where someone actually followed me home and were shouting and swearing at me, so I was running with the buggy because I don't really want to get beaten up with my son."

Myleene also heads to North Wales to stay with 43-year-old single mother Rhiannon, who relies on state benefits after being made redundant and losing the family home shortly after her marriage broke down.

She now looks after her trio of children and her grandmother in a rented house.

"It's a bridge for now," she says. "You almost feel like it's a failure. You get a little bit embarrassed about it."

Myleene takes Rhiannon to meet a group of single mothers called Single With Kids in the Delamere Forest.

Rhiannon describes her experiences with the group as, "Like an epiphany." She says: "I've gone through that walk and come back and it's like, 'Yeah we're single mums, and look what we do.'"

There are 200,000 single dads raising their kids in Britain, and many of them also rely on benefits.

So with that in mind, Myleene visits Dad's House, a charity where fathers get the chance to talk to other single dads.

One father, Luke, tells her: "I hated myself for having to go to the job centre. People ask you, 'How do you get your money?' When I say income support, 'Oh, dole dossier scum.' I don't want to claim but I have no choice."



Myleene Klass: Single Mum on Benefits, Tuesday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

A Midsummer Night's Dream

BBC1, 8.30pm

The Hollow Crown: The War of the Roses gave us a history lesson (of sorts), but now the BBC is turning its attention to Shakespeare's most magical comedy, A Midsummer Night's Dream. It's been adapted by former Doctor Who showrunner Russell T Davies, but while he's put his own stamp on it – and gathered an all-star cast including Matt Lucas, Maxine Peake and Bernard Cribbins – he assures us that he's sticking to the Bard's words. For those unfamiliar with the story, it opens in Athens, where dictator Theseus is planning to wed Hippolyta, a prisoner of war, and young Hermia is determined to escape a marriage to man she doesn't love. Meanwhile, in the woods, trouble is brewing between the King and Queen of the fairies, while in the town, the leading man of a squabbling amateur theatre group is about to undergo a magical transformation.

TUESDAY

World War One Remembered: The Battle of Jutland

BBC2, 7pm

David Dimbleby looks back on the day's events held to commemorate the Battle of Jutland, one of greatest sea battles in naval history. For one day in

May 1916 the outcome of the First World War hung in the balance as 250 of Britain and Germany's most powerful warships fought head to head in the North Sea. Today, 100 years on, The Duke of Edinburgh, together with the German President, lead the tributes to those who fought and remember the one in 10 sailors who lost their lives.

WEDNESDAY

Lose Weight for Love

BBC1, 8pm

Tanya Byron helps Bob and Jane, whose overeating and excessive drinking is making them so unhappy that it is threatening to drive them apart. Over the past few years, the couple have piled on the pounds through eating vast meals and drinking up to 25 bottles of wine a week, and Bob admits that he no longer finds his partner attractive. Tanya and her team separate the pair for 10 weeks, arranging for Jane to resolve a long-standing issue with her adult daughter, and introducing former semi-professional footballer Bob to the fun of exercise.

Versailles

BBC2, 9.30pm

It's not even aired in Britain yet, but this lavish period drama – which has previously been shown in France – is already whipping up controversy due to its sex scenes, with one MP questioning whether it's the sort of thing the BBC ought to be showing. Now, UK viewers have the chance to see what all the fuss is about. Mixing historical and fictional characters, the drama begins in the France of 1667, where the young King Louis XIV (George Blagden) is determined to stamp his authority on court and country, but is all too aware of the legacy of 'The Fronde', a series of civil wars which saw the nobility rebel against the crown. His plan to bring the rich to heel involves turning his father's hunting lodge into Europe's most magnificent chateau.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, Monday, BBC1, 8.30pm

THURSDAY

Live International Football

ITV, 7.30pm

England v

Portugal (Kick-off 7.45pm). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from both teams' final friendly before Euro 2016, which comes from Wembley Stadium. Roy Hodgson will be keen to cast his eye over his side in a match environment one more time before selecting his team to face Russia a week on Saturday, and they are likely to face a difficult encounter against the Portuguese. Fernando Santos' men have been handed what looks like one of the easier groups in France, and will be hopeful that they can go far, especially if talisman Cristiano Ronaldo is at his brilliant best. With analysis from Ian Wright and Lee Dixon.

FRIDAY

Fraud – How They Steal Your ID

ITV, 9pm

Criminals are increasingly procuring bank and credit card details from online customers, which are then freely traded on the so-called 'dark web'. However, as this programme reveals, to succeed in doing this they must first get personal with their targets using a combination of data hacks, spam e-mail and malware – often coupled by posing as inquisitive bank staff via telephone calls. With reference to true-life occurrences, this programme outlines the various techniques used to swindle account holders of their cash. Narrated by Shaun Dooley.

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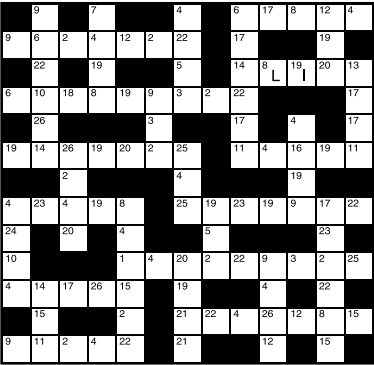
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Capital

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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

F	W	P	Z	L	R	E	B	J	C	G	Y	I	D
I	X	H	O	Q	T	A	S	N	K	V	M	U	

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

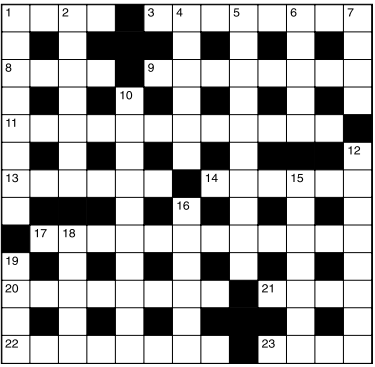
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 1. Point to a tree from the window (4)
- 3. The parson's address (8)
- 8. Sound as a bell (4)
- 9. Encouraging applause? (8)
- 11. Bet the flag will, sometimes (4,1,7)
- 13. Strange desire to settle somewhere (6)
- 14. I am in a rage, it appears (6)
- 17. Educated postman? (3,2,7)
- 20. Hip seams split by stress (8)
- 21. Still not excited (4)
- 22. Gives some support for regular girlfriends (8)
- 23. Stupefy in a most unusual fashion (4)

Down

- 1. His paper might be valuable (8)
- 2. Has no bite? (7)
- 4. Expire, though once healthy (6)
- 5. Choose to speak to the voters (10)
- 6. The very best from France (5)
- 7. Excavates lodgings (4)
- 10. This fight will be very close (4-2-4)
- 12. Yet he may be a queen! (8)
- 15. A nice tax might produce it, but it wouldn't be right (7)
- 16. Fish for position, we hear (6)
- 18. It brought to notice the gravity of the world situation (5)
- 19. They may be sweet to eat, or not! (4)



Quick Clues:

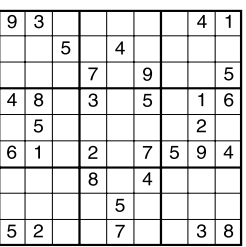
Across

- 1. Applaud (4)
- 3. Trustworthy (8)
- 8. Observe (4)
- 9. Mark in degrees (8)
- 11. White-hot (12)
- 13. Reputation (6)
- 14. Lethargy (6)
- 17. Loving (12)
- 20. Expulsion (8)
- 21. Lake (4)
- 22. Guardianship (8)
- 23. Active (4)

Down

- 1. Persuade (8)
- 2. Commodity (7)
- 4. Merited (6)
- 5. Token (10)
- 6. Muscular strength (5)
- 7. Level (4)
- 10. Accompanying (10)
- 12. Verdure (8)
- 15. Tableland (7)
- 16. Powerful (6)
- 18. Mock-assault (5)
- 19. Exploit (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	2	3	9	8	1	5	6	4
6	5	8	4	7	2	9	3	1
9	1	4	6	5	3	8	7	2
1	4	7	8	2	5	3	9	6
2	3	5	7	9	6	1	4	8
8	6	9	1	3	4	7	2	5
4	7	1	3	6	8	2	5	9
3	6	2	5	4	9	6	1	7
5	9	6	2	1	7	4	8	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Greasepaint; 9 Tirades; 10 Still; 11 Nylon; 12 Russian; 13 Answer; 15 Brogue; 18 Elector; 20 Least; 22 Sepia; 23 Aspiring; 24 Battered. Down: 2 Rural; 3 Andante; 4 Ensure; 5 Asses; 6 Nailing; 7 Stand at ease; 8 Clandestine; 14 Steeple; 16 Relapse; 17 Truant; 19 Trump; 21 Agree. QUICK - Across: 1 Application; 9 Abandon; 10 Nice; 11 Ennui; 12 Elegant; 13 Enrage; 15 Scheme; 18 Sultana; 20 Lull; 22 Rapid; 23 Asiatic; 24 Secret agent. Down: 2 Plain; 3 Lodging; 4 Cancel; 5 Tense; 6 Overawe; 7 Tape measure; 8 Weathercock; 14 Relapse; 16 Calling; 17 Vacant; 19 Adder; 21 Latin.

Quiz

- 1. Of which country is Lusaka the capital?
- 2. Who wrote the opera Sir John In Love in 1929?
- 3. What is the highest mountain in the Cairngorms?
- 4. What type of creature is the mudskipper?
- 5. By what name was Robert MacGregor better known?
- 6. Which sport's principal forms are strokeplay and matchplay?
- 7. Who is the patron saint of Scotland?
- 8. Which disease is also called Hansen's disease?
- 9. What is a saluki?
- 10. Which country's all-woman team won the three-day event at the 1994 World Equestrian Games?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Lady Helen Taylor; 2 Iraq; 3 Burmese; 4 Yin and Yang; 5 Rio Grande; 6 Stendhal; 7 Mo Mowlam; 8 E Nesbit; 9 Anglican; 10 Stentor.
- Niner: ADVERSITY

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 14628 gives a modern vessel,
- 371129 gives an old vessel,
- 173556 gives a stretch of water.



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MONDAY

- Rowley Regis**
Dudley Golf Club, Turners Hill
From 28th December, 7pm
Tel Meryl: 07702 237885
- Sedgley**
St Chads & All Saints Social Club
High Holborn, Dudley Road
5pm and 7pm
Tel: Gaz 07517 675787
- Norton**
The Scout Hut, Kempton Way
Off Heath Farm Road, 9.30am
Tel: Marie 01384 893001
- Wordsley**
Richardson Hall
Lawnswood Road 5pm & 7pm
Tel Ian: 07970 147592
- Netherton**
Dudley Wood Methodist Church
Quarry Rd, Netherton
9.30am
Tel: Lisa 07986 673899

Netherton

- Cole Street Methodist Church
Cole Strett 5.30pm and 7pm
Tel Heather: 07729 105659
- Thorns Primary School**
Thorns Road, Quarry Bank
5pm and 7pm
Tel Lisa: 07986 673899
- TUESDAY**
- Gornal Wood**
Himley Road Methodist Church Himley
Road (Large Car Park at rear via chapel
walk) 9.30am
Tel Becki: 07986 407934
- Norton**
Gig Hill Primary School
The Broadway, 7pm
Tel: kelly 07857 244854
- Wordsley**
Richardson Hall
Lawnswood Road 10am
Tel Ian: 07970 147592

Woodsetton

- Bramford Primary School
Park Road 6.00pm and 7.45pm
Tel Louise: 07967 624573
- Gornal**
Zoar Methodist Church
Abbey Road 5pm and 7pm
Tel Sue: 01384 211425
- Wollaston**
St James C of E Primary School
Kingsway 7pm
Tel Jo: 07725 987340
- Netherton**
Cole Street Methodist Church
Cole Street 9.30am
Tel Heather: 07729 105659
- Rowley Regis**
Rowley Regis Disability Centre
26 Rowley Village 5.30pm and 7.30pm
Tel Kenton: 07982 408088
- Dudley (Wrensneest)**
Wrensneest Community Centre
Summer Road 10am
Tel Louise: 07967 624573
- Norton**
The Scout Hut, Kempton Way,
off Heath Farm Road 9.30am
Tel Caroline: 01562 888315
- Amblecote**
Peters Hill Primary School
Gayfield Avenue 7pm
Tel Lynne: 01384 455427
- Bromley / Kingswinford**
Dingle Community Centre
Madeley Road 5 pm & 7 pm
Tel Diane: 07974 657589

WEDNESDAY

- Kingswinford**
British Legion
Summerhill Road 3.30pm
5pm and 6.30pm
Tel Ann: 07787 186259
- Brockmoor**
Brockmoor Community Centre
Pensnett Road 9.30am and 11.30am
Tel Ian: 01384 827999
- Amblecote**
Amblecote Primary School
School Drive 5.30pm and 7.15pm
Tel Caroline: 01562 888315
- Netherton**
Hill Crest School and
Community College
Simms Lane 7pm
Tel Heather: 07729 105659
- Tividale**
St Michaels Church
Tividale Road 5pm and 7pm
Tel Kenton: 07982 408088
- Stourbridge / Oldswinford**
St Marys Church Hall
Rectory Road 4pm 5.30pm
and 7.30pm
Tel Kerry: 01384 833812
- Brierley Hill**
Withymoor Primary School
Gayfield Avenue 7pm
Tel Lynne: 01384 455427
- Lower Gornal**
The Straits Primary School
Milton Crescent 7pm
Tel Marion: 07887 594344

Upper Gornal

- Upper Gornal Methodist Church
Spills Meadow off Kent Street 9.30am
Tel Lynn: 07963 539384
- Dudley / Upper Gornal**
Bishop Milner RC School
Burton Road 7pm
Tel Sue: 01902 882323
- THURSDAY**
- Tividale**
Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy,
Lower City Road, 7pm
Tel: Sarah 07875 445462
- Dudley**
Central Methodist Church
Cross Street 5pm and 7pm
Tel: Sarah 07837 950797
- Pensnett**
Community Centre,
High Street, 4pm and 6pm
Tel: Gill 01384 830929
- Sedgley / Upper Gornal**
St Chads and all Saints Social Club
High Holborn, Dudley Road 5pm and 7pm
Tel Sue: 01902 882323
- Brierley Hill**
Nine Locks Community Centre
Hill Street 9.15am
Tel Jill: 01384 830929
- Dudley**
Central Methodist Church
Cross Street 10am 12noon
Tel: Sue 01384 211425

Stourbridge

- Greenfield Primary School
Hill Street 5.30pm and 7.30pm
Tel Marie: 01384 893001
- FRIDAY**
- Sedgley**
Sedgley Community Centre,
Ladies Walk
(Access via the Priory) 9.30 am
Tel Gareth: 07517 675787
- Stourbridge**
The Bonded Warehouse
Canal Street 9.30am
Tel Jo: 07725 987340
- Kingswinford**
St Marys Church Hall
The Village 8.30am and 10.30am
Tel Sue: 07825 354224
- Rowley Regis**
Rowley Regis Disability Centre
26 Rowley Village 9.30am
Tel Kenton: 07982 408088
- SATURDAY**
- Lower Gornal**
Roberts Primary School
Robert Street 8.30am and 10.30am
Tel Sarah: 07837 950797
- Hawbush / Brierley Hill**
Oakfield Community Centre
Brettell Lane 7.30am, 9.30am
and 11.15am
Tel Jo: 07725 987340
- Oldbury**
Portway Lifestyle Centre
Newbury Lane 9am and 11am
Tel Kenton: 07982 408088





Garlic mushrooms on ciabatta bread



Tomato and basil linguine with veg



A good tradition - The Horns Inn, Rugeley



Rustic charm - the olde worlde interior

Trying new pubs can be risky but at Horns you'll be Inn for a real treat

EXPLORING new pubs is always risky but our minds were instantly put at ease on entering The Horns Inn.

But before going inside, we had a quick peek outside. If you're going for a day out at Cannock Chase or simply venturing a little further afield for some good nosh, this is the pub to wind up at.

Based on the edge of Rugeley, in Slitting Mill and a five-minute walk from The Chase, the pub sits next to a fishing pond and has a handy bus stop for those who don't drive and ample parking for those who do. And so we entered. Refurbished back in 2014, everything still looks fresh and clean - no sticky floors or 'old pub' smell in this place.

The interior has a trendy, yet traditional feel. The mismatched chairs, wooden tables,

By Louise Rouvray

exposed brick walls, stone fireplace and firewood make for a rustic and relaxed feel. It may sound olde-worlde, but the stone-coloured walls, new wooden flooring and modern lighting gives the place a refreshing 21st century air.

Within five minutes of us being seated and we had already had a good look at the menu. I went for the pan fried button mushrooms in a garlic and herb sauce served with ciabatta to start, while my fiancé opted for the fresh homemade soup of the day - butternut squash.

For the mains, which arrived promptly, I'd gone for freshly prepared linguine with tomato and basil sauce, while my fiancé had chosen the 21-day aged 10oz sirloin steak, cooked medium rare (as requested) and served with grilled tomato, mushroom,

peas and homemade chips. The chips here are to die for - literally like going to a soft, potato heaven with well-seasoned skinned pearly gates.

Being a vegetarian, unfortunately I couldn't taste test his mains, but he assured me the steak was tender and not too greasy.

Positive

He sliced through it easily enough, with about the right amount of chewiness/toughness and made contented grunting noises throughout - all in all, a very positive response.

My linguine was perfectly cooked - the pasta breaking easily in my mouth, but retaining a firm texture. The tomato sauce took me back to our recent trip to Italy, sipping wine in the sun and consuming enough pasta to fill a crater. Sliced courgettes, onions and peppers really brought

out the simple, yet very scrumptious basil and tomato sauce. We had been aiming for a pudding, but I was filled to the brim.

Two starters, two mains and three drinks came in at £50.90, which some may consider a tad pricey, but put the quality (and quantity) of food on a set of scales with money on the other side and I'd say you have a fairly balanced load. Plus I must add my other half went for one of the most expensive things on the menu (as ever) - the 10oz sirloin steak, which was £18.95 - whereas most mains range from £9.95 to £12.95.

The pub also caters for all alcoholic tastes. Alongside a selection of ales, cider and wine, it's a gin lover's paradise with more than 48 artisan options and there's even a whiskey snug to settle into for a more cosy night out. I can safely say we will be back for a tippie or two, plus I need to try out their bean burger.

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London Theatre Breaks

Price includes:

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Prices are per person (unless otherwise stated). Please read brochures/web pages for full description plus terms and conditions. Please note Star Reader Travel are unable to take bookings. Dates subject to availability. Coach pick up points offered: Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show — see brochure/web page for details.

London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here, often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe. The winning combination of engaging writing, captivating stage design and commanding performance has enabled London theatres to achieve box office smashes time and time again.

Omega Holidays offer a superb portfolio of theatre breaks, managing the whole show package which includes travel, either by coach or rail, four-star accommodation and various price bands for each show. Make your own way breaks are also available to book.

Rail inclusive breaks - Two days

Saturday Night Theatre from £169.⁹⁵

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital.

There's a selection of London hotels to choose from (supplements may apply) and rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday.

The ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail inclusive breaks - Three days

Theatre Showstopper from £239.⁹⁵

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday returning on Sunday.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade, plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel (supplements may apply).

Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

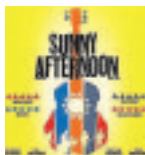
Coach inclusive breaks - Two days

Saturday Night from £149.⁹⁵

Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £159.⁹⁵

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option, see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the evening performance (meal not included).

Both breaks include a standard priced theatre ticket and the option to upgrade plus an overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel.



DAYS: 2 OR 3 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)



Five-bedroomed individual style split-level self-build

Built in the 1970s, 6b Prospect Road, Lower Gornal, is a five-bedroomed individual style self-build, which is generally described as a split-level bungalow or a house.

It is for sale through Swinscoes at £249,950.

A spokesman for the selling agent said: "Although unique in design, it suits the area and particularly the street 'Prospect Road' very well, which hosts a selection of characterful individual style houses which are only a couple of minutes' walk into Gornal Village – ideal for someone who is looking for a convenient location, as well as something a little out of the ordinary.

The split-level accommodation has the living space including lounge, kitchen, shower room and a reception room on the first floor and has four further bedrooms downstairs.

There are well laid out and low maintenance gardens to the rear and stretching to the side of the property. It also has a balcony overlooking the garden from the lounge taking full advantage of the fantastic views.

The spokesman added: "Although some improvements have been made, the property has much more potential to further improve the house cosmetically, or even extend to the side – subject to relevant planning permissions – if so required by a purchaser.

"Essentially, the property offers the space and the scope for somebody to create their ideal home and viewing is highly recommended."

Swinscoes are a local, independent, family-run estate agent that specialises in the sale of residential properties in Sedgley, Coseley, Wolverhampton, Dudley and the surrounding areas.

Having had over 30 years experience selling property in the area coupled with its wealth of local knowledge, Swinscoes can provide an unparalleled, professional service with that personal touch.

At Swinscoes estate agents, offering the highest level of customer service is one of their main objectives and biggest strengths.

The spokesman added: "We maintain communication throughout the whole process of selling your home from start to finish. Our team in Sedgley have years of experience and an excellent track record of achieving sales."

The company director is Christine Swinscoe. Born and bred in Dudley, her career spans more than 40 years.

Christine has many years' experience in the industry, initially starting a letting agents company, then moving onto Payne Estates and then finally taking over the company, creating Swinscoes Estate Agents in 2005.

KEY FEATURES

KEY FEATURES

Built in the 1970s

Five bedrooms

Unique self build

Few minutes walk to the village

Convenient location

Fantastic views

LOWER GORNAL £249,950



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Swinscoes
TEL: 01902 672274
EMAIL: admin@swinscoes.co.uk



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New



HIMLEY, Bridgnorth Road

A PERIOD DETACHED FAMILY RESIDENCE offering an EXCEPTIONALLY SPACIOUS layout, RECENTLY IMPROVED comprising: Porch, Hall, large Lounge, formal Dining Room, Second Sitting Room, spacious Dining / Kitchen, Utility, Guest Cloaks/WC, FIVE BEDROOMS and SPACIOUS FAMILY BATHROOM. LARGE DRIVE, GARAGE and BROAD REAR GARDEN private and sunny. EPC D

£455,000



SEDGLEY, Wilton Close (Off Setton Drive)

UNIQUE WITH SELF CONTAINED "GRANNY-ANNEX"! Highly individual, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family residence upon corner plot with panoramic distant views. Principal residence comprises: entrance vestibule, 31 ft reception hall, three stores, cloaks, 17 ft lounge, dining room, well equipped kitchen, three bedrooms (one with bathroom en suite), shower room, garage, Granny Annex provides: entrance vestibule, living/dining room, hallway, kitchen, bedroom with shower room en suite, Delightful garden. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £350,000

New



SWINDON, High Street

A STUNNING and SUBSTANTIAL PERIOD DETACHED FAMILY HOME well located within the heart of desirable Swindon village, close to canal side walks and beautiful open countryside, offering VERY GENEROUS accommodation, all of which is APPOINTED TO A VERY HIGH STANDARD throughout with 4 SUPERB BEDROOMS, master bedroom with large EN SUITE bathroom With a BROAD DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED REAR GARDEN. EPC D

£340,000

New



NETHERTON, Alpine Drive

OUTSTANDING FOUR BEDROOM, DETACHED HOME comprising: Hall, Stylish Lounge Diner, Modern Kitchen, Utility, Guests Cloakroom, FOUR DOUBLE BEDROOMS, (Master with En-Suite), Bathroom, Large driveway & GARDEN with LUXURIOUS SWIMMING POOL. EPC:

£259,995

New



KINGSWINFORD, Mayfair Drive

An EXTENDED DETACHED FAMILY HOME enjoying a large corner position within sought after 'Valley Fields' offering a large layout of deceptive accommodation, including 2 large reception rooms and THREE first floor bedrooms. With DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and secluded rear garden. EPC E

£239,950



LOWER GORNAL, Sandstone Close

SCANDANAVIAN STYLE. Gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family home constructed to first quality specification & in exemplary order. Designed to match adjacent property with minimal energy/running costs the accommodation includes; hall, cloakroom, lounge, 19ft 'hub of the house' dining kitchen, garden room. Three bedrooms, bathroom, garden, GARAGE (rear), additional parking. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £189,950



LOWER GORNAL, Flavells Lane

FLEXIBLE ACCOMMODATION! - gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached comprising: porch hall lounge, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, shower room. To the first floor are two double bedrooms; 27 ft car port, delightful garden EPC D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £184,950



WOODSETTON, Pool Street

Consistently maintained, gas centrally heated (combi boiler), double glazed & cavity wall insulated detached with LARGE GARAGE (opposite). Presented in exemplary order, accommodation includes; hallway, inner hall, cloakroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen with integrated oven, hob and extractor. Three bedrooms, bathroom, shower room. Extensive loft. Block paved drive, magnificent rear garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Price: £180,000

New



LANESFIELD, Laburnum Road

A neatly presented, centrally heated and double glazed first-time buyer property situated in the popular Lanesfield area of Wolverhampton. This EXTENDED semi-detached home boasts Entrance hallway, living room, extended kitchen-diner, TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, well-appointed family bathroom, enclosed rear garden and driveway to front. Viewing recommended. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £134,950

New



NETHERTON, Saltwells Road

Encompassing a MODERN KITCHEN which is OPEN PLAN to CONSERVATORY & DINING AREA, this THREE BEDROOM property offers a fantastic opportunity for FIRST TIME BUYERS & also comprises: Lounge, Bathroom, Pleasant Garden, GARAGE & CARPORT. EPC:

£134,950



BRIERLEY HILL, Terrace Street

This DELIGHTFULLY DECORATED, END TERRACE HOME would make a lovely FIRST TIME BUY & is available for sale with NO UPWARD CHAIN. Encompassing: Hall, Stylish Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Contemporary Bathroom, Pleasant Garden. EPC D

£134,950



NETHERTON, Crabourne Road

This WELL PROPORTIONED & DECEPTIVELY SPACIOUS, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: DETACHED DOUBLE GARAGE, TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, Kitchen, THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, House Bathroom, Attractive Driveway, Pretty Rear Garden & HUGE BASEMENT. EPC:

£129,950



BROCKMOOR, Fox Foot Drive

This ATTRACTIVELY PRESENTED, TWO BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Lovely Living Room, SPACIOUS BREAKFAST KITCHEN, TWO GENEROUS FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Modern Bathroom, Driveway & Great Rear Garden with both Patio & Lawned Areas. EPC D

£125,000



SEDGLEY, Dormston House, Dudley Street

A GROUND FLOOR gas centrally heated and double glazed two bedroom flat in gated development within walking distance of Sedgley's Bullring and all associated amenities. The recently redecorated accommodation comprises through living room with well equipped kitchen section, inner hallway, two bedrooms, bathroom with white suite, allocated parking, communal grounds. EPC: C. SEDGLEY



LOWER GORNAL, Wealdstone Drive

A delightfully presented property situated in the popular area of Lower Gornal, benefitting from UPVC double glazing, part gas central heating, entrance hall way, guest W/C, living room, kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden, garden to front. Ideal first time buyer property. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950



BRIERLEY HILL, John Street

This RATHER LOVELY, TWO BEDROOM, SEMI DETACHED HOME should interest first time buyers, and comprises: Hall, Generous Sitting Room with Dining Area, Kitchen, Two Bedroom, Box Room, Large Bathroom and Enclosed Rear Garden. EPC: D

£114,950



UPPER GORNAL, Hill Street

NO UPWARD CHAIN - Fastidiously maintained, gas centrally heated (recent boiler) & double glazed traditional end terrace of character that has been transformed in recent years with GOOD DISTANT VIEWS from the rear comprising: Lounge, recently refitted breakfast kitchen, two bedrooms, reappointed bathroom with white suite, slabbed patio and ALLOCATED PARKING SPACE. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £107,500



DUDLEY, Elm Green, Old Park Farm Estate

A conscientiously maintained and well presented, semi-detached property with UPVC double glazing, part gas centrally heated and situated the popular area of 'The Greens'. This fine property benefits from THREE BEDROOMS, living room, kitchen-diner, guest W/C, refitted bathroom, block-paved driveway and enclosed rear garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £104,950

New price WAS £120,000, NOW £115,000

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QUARRY BANK, Coppice Lane

This SUBSTANTIAL, FOUR BEDROOM, DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, Well fitted Kitchen, Conservatory, Utility, Guests W.C, Four First Floor Bedrooms & House Bathroom. Large Driveway, DOUBLE GARAGE & EXTENSIVE GARDENS. EPC F



WOLVERHAMPTON, Farrington Road, Ettingshall Park

Traditional 'Mucklow' style semi-detached property is situated in the extremely popular area of Ettingshall Park in Wolverhampton. Boasting central heating and double glazing, this ideal family home has entrance porch, hallway, two reception rooms, kitchen, THREE BEDROOM family bathroom, garage, enclosed rear garden, driveway and garden to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY



SEDGLEY, Retreat Gardens (Off Tipton Street)

RARE OPPORTUNITY! Ideal 'retirement' bungalow being positioned in a quiet 'backwater' just off Tipton Street within level distance of Sedgley's Bull Ring. Primarily UPVC double glazed accommodation includes: hall, kitchen, store, bathroom, double bedroom (with a fine range of fitted units), transverse 17ft (max) living/dining room, CONSERVATORY, garden, allocated parking. EPC: E. SEDGLEY.

New price

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £279,000

Offers in the region of £154,950

Offers in the region of £110,000



KINGSWINFORD, Inglewood Close

A DECEPTIVE SEMI DETACHED DORMER BUNGALOW within a delightful cul-de-sac, BACKING ONTO ALLOTMENTS, providing a GENEROUS layout which requires updating, with 2/3 BEDROOMS. Set back beyond the DRIVEWAY with GARAGE/STORE and a landscaped rear garden. EPC C

£179,950



WOODSETTON, Sedgley Road

Meticulously maintained, FREEHOLD, gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached presented in exemplary order throughout, comprising: hallway, store, 15'5" lounge, refitted dining kitchen with a fine range of 'Avanti' units with many fitted appliances, CONSERVATORY beyond. Three bedrooms, bathroom with a white suite. Delightful 'low-maintenance' rear garden with brick GARAGE and driveway beyond. EPC: D. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £173,000



SEDGLEY, Dormston Drive

Situated within walking distance of Bull Ring; a gas radiator centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached comprising: hallway, cloaks, 24'5" through living/dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom. block paving, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers around £154,950



PENSNETT, School Street

THIS MODERN STYLE, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED PROPERTY would make a SUPERB FAMILY HOME & comprises: Hall, Lounge, Spacious Breakfast Kitchen, Guests W.C. Three Family Bedrooms, White Suite Bathroom, Driveway, Garage, Fantastic Garden. EPC C

£139,950



WOODSETTON, Park Close

An attractive, Freehold, gas centrally heated & mostly uPVC double glazed semi detached at head of short convenient cul-de-sac briefly comprising: entrance porch, reception hall, lounge with bay, dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, tiled bathroom. Parking, and neat/secluded rear garden with substantial timber workroom. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,500



COSELEY, Brooklyn Grove

Fantastically presented, centrally heated & double glazed residence situated in the sought after area of Coseley. Having been extended to include a utility room, this THREE BEDROOM semi detached boasts an entrance hallway, living room, kitchen-diner, guest W.C, family bathroom, attractive enclosed rear garden and driveway to front. Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £124,950



UPPER GORNAL, Eve Lane

A fantastically presented traditional semi-detached property situated in the popular Upper Gornal area. It consists of entrance hall, well-appointed lounge, fitted kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, enclosed rear-garden with CABIN, centrally heated & double glazed, off-road parking. EPC Rating D SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £124,950



SEDGLEY, Kings Road

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Significantly modernised, improved traditional terrace within walking distance of Sedgley's Bullring and all amenities. Accommodation provides: living room, lounge, refitted kitchen, bathroom, TWO BEDROOMS, dressing room, central heating, double glazing, rear garden. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950



UPPER GORNAL, Stable Court

NO UPWARD CHAIN! Tremendously enhanced, gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler)& recently double glazed end 'starter home' at head of cul de sac within WALKING DISTANCE of so many day to day amenities comprising: hall, store, REFITTED KITCHEN, living/dining room two bedrooms (both with fitted built in wardrobes), REAPPOINTED bathroom, landscaped garden, parking. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £123,500



LOWER GORNAL, Deepdale Lane

Spacious modernised gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed terrace of character in popular area with panoramic distant views. Delightful accommodation provides sitting room, cellarge, dining room (with open fire place), enlarged/upgraded 17'6" breakfast kitchen (granite work surfaces Belfast sink), refitted/ tiled bathroom with white classic style suite. TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS (one with shower room en suite), further potential, good size gardens. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £115,000



PENSNETT, Bryce Road

This WELL ARRANGED SEMI DETACHED HOME displays great potential, and comprises: Hall, Sitting Room open to Kitchen, Verandah, Shower Room, Two Bedrooms and Bathroom, Impressed Concrete Drive, Store/Possible Garage, Large Rear Garden. NO CHAIN.

£99,950



LANESFIELD, Mount Road

MINING SEARCH AVAILABLE. A good-sized semi-detached property that offers plenty of potential. Situated in a popular area of Lanesfield, Wolverhampton, this family home benefits from: entrance hall, living room, kitchen-diner, bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS, enclosed rear garden, garden to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: F. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £96,950



LOWER GORNAL, Boundary Hill

Traditional style, gas centrally heated semi detached home is available with NO UPWARD CHAIN and may be an ideal first time purchase. Accommodation briefly comprises entrance hall, guest w.c., through lounge, kitchen with a fine range of units, three bedrooms, bathroom & rear garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in excess of £95,000



LOWER GORNAL, Park Road

Set in a well regarded district convenient for many amenities, this Freehold, Gas centrally heated, Upvc double glazed, semi detached has further potential. This home comprises: hall, lounge with feature stone fireplace with 'Living Flame' gas fire, store, kitchen with integrated gas hob and electric oven, dining room (with patio doors). Two double bedrooms, bathroom. OUTSIDE: Through Lobby with plumbing for washing machine, separate toilet. Secluded rear garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £89,950



TIPTON, Wood Street

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Superbly presented first floor maisonette situated within walking distance of Tipton centre. This fully modernised property benefits from living room, kitchen, bedroom, shower room, central heating and double glazing, garage and parking. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £69,950

K. Stuart Swash

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PROPERTY



Luxury top-floor apartment ideal as buy-to-let

A well presented two-bedroomed luxury top-floor apartment in a popular location, 24 Purlin Wharf, Netherton, would make a great buy-to-let or investment purchase.

It is for sale through The Property Shop at £94,950.

The smartly presented accommodation has Karndean flooring throughout and briefly comprises of an entrance hall, light

**NETHERTON
£94,950**

and comfortable lounge, master bedroom with en suite, second bedroom, modern fitted kitchen with light coloured units and complementary working surfaces, splash-back tiling and wood-effect flooring.

There is also a bathroom with a modern white suite.

The property is decorated in neutral shades and has allocated off-road parking. The agents stress that this apartment really needs to be viewed to be appreciated.

For further information contact The Property Shop on 01384 456022 or visit www.thepropertyshop.co.uk

Modernised home would be perfect for young family

LOWER GORNAL

£157,000

>>>

Situated in a quiet cul-de-sac just off The Straits, this beautifully presented three-bedroomed semi-detached home is in the sought after address of The Alley, Lower Gornal.

It is close to the village and popular schools. It is for sale through Swinscoes at £157,000.

The property has had a full make-over, modernising the internal accommodation. It comprises an entrance into a side lobby, hallway, breakfast kitchen, lounge, three good size bedrooms and bathroom.

There is a single size integral garage, new drive and a rear garden. This property is ideal for first time buyers or those with a young family. Contact Swinscoes on 01902 672274 or visit www.swinscoes.co.uk



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EPC: F

NEW

SEDGLEY GOWER ROAD

- Well Presented Detached Bungalow
- Two Double Bedrooms
- 22ft Lounge Diner
- Sun Room to Rear
- Kitchen, Shower Room
- Carport, Garage, Off Road Parking
- Private Rear Garden
- Heating, uPVC Double Glazing
- Panoramic Views to Rear

£ 225,000

EPC: D

NEW

SEDGLEY GOSPEL END STREET

- Luxurious Terraced Property
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Stunning Living Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Modern First Floor Bathroom
- Central Heating, Double Glazing
- Converted Chapel Built 1821
- Original Character Features

£149,950

EPC: E

NEW PRICE

SEDGLEY RICHMOND ROAD

- Detached Family Home • Corner Position
- Three Bedrooms • Living Room Plus Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen • Central Heating & Double Glazing
- Off Road Parking Plus Garage • Well Maintained

£195,000

EPC: E

SEDGLEY WOLVERHAMPTON ROAD

- Substantial Detached Property Built 1894
- Victorian Style Four Bedroom Family Residence
- 40ft Lounge Diner plus Sitting Room
- Ample Off Road Parking plus Garage

£425,000

EPC: D

WOMBOURNE PENLEIGH GARDENS

- Detached Family Residence • Four Bedrooms
- Lounge, Dining Room • Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Downstairs WC • Family Bathroom plus Ensuite
- Off Road Parking plus Garage • Pleasant Rear

£294,000

EPC: C

SEDGLEY HIGH ARCAL DRIVE

- Three Bedroom Detached Family Residence
- Occupying a Quiet and Pleasant Position
- 23ft Living Room, Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom • Off Road Parking plus Garage

£210,000

EPC: C

NEW PRICE

SEDGLEY BILSTON STREET

- Detached Family Property • Three Bedrooms
- Living Room plus Dining Room
- Double Glazed Conservatory
- Off Road Parking to the Front and Rear

£192,500

EPC: E

WOODSETTON MARLBOROUGH ROAD

- Three Bedroom Detached Bungalow
- Living Room plus Dining Area
- Bathroom with Separate Shower Cubicle
- Fitted Kitchen • Off Road Parking

£234,950

EPC: TBC

NEW

SEDGLEY ALDERDALE AVENUE

- Detached Bungalow
- Two Double Bedrooms
- 16ft x 15ft Living Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom
- Central Heating, uPVC Double Glazing
- Off Road Parking
- Carport plus Garage
- Private Rear Garden

£194,950

EPC: D

NEW

SEDGLEY ALDERDALE AVENUE

- Detached Bungalow
- Two Bedrooms
- 16ft Living Room
- Kitchen
- Modern Shower Room
- Central Heating & Double Glazing
- Delightful Rear Garden
- No Upward Chain
- Highly Desirable Location

£159,950

EPC: D

NEW

STRAITS BYRON CROFT

- Detached Bungalow
- Quiet Cul-de-sac Location
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Living Room with Patio Doors to Garden
- Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom
- Off Road Parking for 2 Vehicles & Garage
- Central Heating, Double Glazing
- Private Rear Garden

£209,950

EPC: C

NEW PRICE

SEDGLEY HIGH PARK CRESCENT

- Impressive Detached Family Residence
- SEVEN Bedrooms, FOUR Bathrooms
- THREE Reception Rooms
- 20ft Breakfast Kitchen plus Utility
- Detached Double Garage
- Central Heating, Double Glazing
- Private Rear Garden
- Stunning Panoramic Views to Rear
- Part Exchange Considered

£465,000

EPC: D

NEW PRICE

LOWER GORNAL SANDSTONE ROAD

- Three Bedrooms Mid-Terraced Property
- Living Room, Dining Kitchen
- Garage in Separate Block
- Central Heating (where specified)
- Double Glazing (where specified)
- Pleasant Rear Garden
- Lovely Views At Rear
- Cul-de-sac Position
- No Upward Chain

£115,000

EPC: D

NEW PRICE

SEDGLEY GOSPEL END ROAD

- Detached Family Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Downstairs WC
- Family Bathroom plus Ensuite
- Ample Off Road Parking plus Garage
- Delightful Rear Garden
- Viewings are Highly Recommended

£338,000



Superb semi-detached five-bedroomed home

OAKHAM, DUDLEY
£274,995

A splendid extended semi-detached family home in a popular location in Dingle Close, Oakham, Dudley, lies in a cul-de-sac just off the Oakham Road.

Having double glazing and central heating, it has driveway parking for at least three cars, an entrance lobby, entrance hall with stairs off, downstairs WC, open-plan lounge/dining room to the front, through room with doors to the rear garden, utility area, modern fitted kitchen with breakfast bar and with family room off.

On the first floor there are five good-sized bedrooms and a house bathroom/WC with bath and separate shower. Outside the rear garden has decking, lawn and further play area.

For further information contact Trinity Property on 01384 213395 or visit www.trinityproperty.net



Transformed Edwardian cottage full of character

PENN COMMON

£300,000

<<<

A quite delightful three-bedroomed double-fronted Edwardian cottage, Clee View, 19 Sedgley Road, Penn Common, lies on the periphery of Penn Conservation Area.

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Transformed over the years by the current owners, while carefully retaining period aspects including double glazed (timber) casements, it has had an overhauled roof, re-pointing, re-lastering, upgraded wiring, gas central heating, re-appointed bathroom and kitchen.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, dining room, sitting room, kitchen, larder, three bedrooms and a bathroom. Viewing is recommended.

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Superbly refurbished, this stunningly spacious period double-fronted cottage in Hurcott Village, Kidderminster.

It is part of a converted former Victorian paper mill, set in private grounds with views over lakes and woodlands.

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reserve and bluebell woods nearby.

The property has two large lounges – one with a superb balcony overlooking the private lake – a charming open-plan fitted kitchen/

dining room, master bedroom, large en suite and dressing room, two further double bedrooms and house bathroom, covered patio, garage, a WC, a utility and underfloor central heating and double glazing.

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House prices surge at five times the pace of earnings

House prices have surged at five times the pace of earnings increases typically over the last five years, according to a think-tank.

The Resolution Foundation said its analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures shows that house prices have increased by 36% since April 2011 across the UK - 5.1 times the 7% increase in average weekly earnings over the same period.

The findings were released as the ONS said UK house prices increased by 9% in the year to March, accelerating from an annual rate of 7.6% in February.

The average UK house price was £292,000 in March, after increasing by 2.5% on the previous month.

The ONS said prices paid by first-time buyers were 9.7% higher in March 2016 than in March 2015. In March 2016, the average price paid for a house by a first-time buyer was £220,000.

According to the figures released by the ONS, house prices have increased on average over the last year by 10.1% in England to reach £307,000, by 2.1% in Wales to reach £176,000 and by 6.4% in Northern Ireland, taking the average property price there to £155,000.

Both the house price index for England and that for Wales are at record highs, the ONS said. In London, house prices have increased by 13% annually to reach £552,000. Across England, the ONS said the North East has the lowest average house price, at £158,000.

The Resolution Foundation said even in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North East of England, where house price growth has been most modest over the last five years, it has been roughly double the pace of average earnings growth.

Lindsay Judge, a senior policy analyst at the Resolution Foundation, said: "Rampant house prices inflation isn't just a problem for wannabe home-owners. It has increased the stock of mortgage debt, and fuelled demand for renting that is driving up costs there too.

"Ultimately we all pay for house price inflation by spending a greater share of our incomes on housing."

Separate figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) showed home mover house purchase lending in March was at its highest levels since 2007. Home movers borrowed £9.3 billion in March, up 75% on February and 82% compared with a year ago.

Buy-to-let lending for house purchase in the first quarter of 2016 was the highest since the CML started tracking the data in 2006, with £7.2 billion of loans advanced.

Landlords borrowed £4.3 billion for house purchase in March, up 290% on March 2015. On April 1, a three percentage point stamp duty hike came into force for people buying second homes, such as buy-to-let investors.

Paul Smee, director general of the CML, said: "Activity was distorted in March due to a rush to beat the introduction of changes to stamp duty on second properties in April, alongside the seasonal uptick in activity before Easter. While the increases are substantial, these supercharged levels of activity are likely to be temporary and will fall back over the summer months."

Landlords seeing a greater return than FTSE investors

Buy-to-let investors typically enjoy a greater return than those who choose to invest in FTSE 100 companies.

New research reveals that while total returns on property investments rose by 9.57 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March, the London-based stock exchange has lost 1.4 per cent in the year to date.

Allison Thompson, managing director at property specialist Leaders, says: "Despite recent buy-to-let tax changes imposed by the government, there is no doubt that the property market still offers an extremely attractive investment opportunity.

Shrewd

"With returns increasing by almost ten per cent over the last year, investing in property is a shrewd way for people to use their savings.

"In comparison, the stock market has failed to deliver a return for many investors and even the best savings accounts are typically offering rates of less than two per cent at the moment."

London continued to drive the buy-to-let market in the 12 months in question, with landlords enjoying a 16.49 per cent increase in returns. It was followed by the east of England (13.18 per cent), the south-east (12.1 per cent) and the East Midlands (8.59 per cent), according to Property Partner's residential market index.

Cheaper

Allison adds: "While returns may be greatest in the south, investors should also consider buying to let in the north where purchase prices are often cheaper and demand in many areas is rising rapidly.



"In particular, Manchester has witnessed a sharp spike in investment activity in recent months.

"Those who wish to benefit from the largest returns in the south can still find

good value for money and, with the help of a local property expert, can pinpoint the most up-and-coming towns in their region.

"Properties to rent remain in high demand, with experts predicting that more

than half of young people will rent their home by 2025.

"This makes it a great time to invest in property and benefit from excellent market conditions."

Let to rent trend popularity growing

There is growing evidence that the concept of let to rent is becoming more popular in the UK where a home owner rents their property out and then rents a place in another location.

While let to rent isn't a new concept, it's becoming a great deal less niche as an alternative owning and living option.

"One of the biggest factors in this trend is the massive and rising cost of moving, and the difficulties that many owners are encountering in replacing their existing mortgage with a similar deal," said David Brooke Smith of Stacks Property Search.

He explained that there are lots of reasons and schools are one of the main drivers. "Families who want to live in a specific catchment area, or who want to be close by for a child's limited time at a particular school, are letting out their home and renting close to the school," he pointed out.

"It's also a great way of trying out a new area without committing to it fully. So for those who are contemplating a move from town to country, vice versa, or from one part of the country to another, or wanting to try out a specific village that has caught their eye but about which they know nothing, it reduces the risk of buying in haste and repenting at leisure," he added.

Other scenarios include short term work contracts, taking time out, such as



on a sabbatical and some even want to move, but can't bear the idea of selling their much loved property.

"There are huge benefits to let to rent. Selling and buying is a big step both emotionally and financially so if there's ever any doubt that it's the correct long term decision, letting to rent makes a lot of sense," said Brooke Smith.

But he warned that while let to rent is often a win-win scenario, there are several issues that need careful consideration before making a decision, most importantly the figures. He pointed out that that big disadvantage is that the rental income will be taxable income.

"You can offset costs related to the property you're letting, but you can't

offset the actual cost of renting. So if you want an even playing field, the figure you have available for your rental may need to be less than the figure you can achieve for letting your property out," he explained.

"Depending on where you're moving from and to, the figures could stack up very nicely. Letting in London, and renting in the country, should mean you're well placed financially. But going in the opposite direction will mean you have to be pragmatic about what you can afford," he added.

He also explained that availability can be a challenge in rural areas as rental homes are often in short supply and the choice can be further limited if landlords choose not to welcome children and or dogs.

Home owners will also need to get consent to let their property from their mortgage provider who may or may not insist on changing the mortgage to a buy to let deal. Those choosing rent to let will also need to put special landlord's insurance in place.

Also, renting is more restricting that owning a home. Home owners used to being able to do what they want to their properties may find it frustrating that they can't knock down walls, replace bathrooms, and make other structural changes.

Top Tips

Property expert Phil Spencer offers his advice to people selling their homes.

He said: "Potential buyers need to imagine themselves living in your house, so get rid of ornaments and photos - especially posters in kids' bedrooms.

"Put things you don't really use on a daily basis in the attic or storage.

"Large pieces of furniture should also go into storage; this will make rooms feel much bigger."



Astra heads into space

By Jonathan Crouch

Vauxhall is hoping to increase its presence in the compact estate sector with the latest Astra Sports Tourer.

MPVs and 4x4s might offer more interesting options for family buyers but the solid, practical virtues of a good estate are not to be under-estimated.

This one's cleaner, more frugal, more practical, higher-tech and sharper to look at than before. It's a better package all-round.

When what you need to fit in your car just won't, you need a bigger car. Family hatchback owners confronted with this nightmare scenario have a number of options at their disposal. They could take the rugged route with a compact 4x4, choose the versatility of a mini-MPV or step up to a medium range saloon.

Alternatively, they could turn to an extended version of the family hatchback they already have. The estate car isn't the trendiest or most exciting option, but when you need a little bit more room, it does the job. Vauxhall's Astra Sports Tourer is little more than an extended Astra hatch but it could be all the car you need, especially in latest generation form.

Many of the leading lights in the family hatchback sector have an estate version. Focus, Golf, Peugeot 308 – the manufacturers of all these models see the value of tagging another few centimetres onto the rear of the five-door hatches to give customers the option of extra carrying capacity.

Vauxhall has a history of following suit with its Astra but like its rivals, sales of Astra estates have traditionally been way down on those of the standard hatchback versions.

The compact estate market looks likely

to remain a niche one but with flashy Sports Tourer branding, this generation Astra estate could be destined to take a bigger slice of it.

Like the rest of the Astra Sports Tourer, the suspension is shared with the Astra hatchback. Reducing this latest model's weight by up to 200kgs has had a significant effect on the way this car drives.

It now soaks up bumps better and turns into the bends more easily, aided by a stiffer chassis and torque vectoring that helps with cornering traction. As before, this Vauxhall does without the kind of independent rear suspension system you'd find on a rival Ford Focus Estate, instead favouring a neat Watts linkage system that claims to reduce sideways motion between the axle and the body of the car as you go through the corners.

Under the bonnet, those in search of petrol power have an up-to-the-minute range of options.

We'd suggest you bypass the most affordable 100PS 1.4-litre engine in favour of the lighter, more responsive and much more efficient 105PS 1.0-litre ECOTEC turbo three cylinder unit. If you need more power, there are a couple of 1.4-litre Turbo powerplants offering 125 or 150PS, plus a top 200PS 1.6 Turbo option. Diesel drivers get Vauxhall's refined 1.6-litre CDTi 'whisper diesel' unit with a choice of three power outputs – 110, 136 or 160PS. The 110PS ecoFLEX variant delivers class-leading efficiency figures – 91.2mpg on the combined cycle and 82g/km of CO₂.

The Sports Tourer body shape further extends the now-sportier styling of the seventh generation five-door model. The slightly arched sloping roofline gives this estate derivative a longer appearance – an effect further enhanced by the divided C-pillar. The rear view aims to combine practicality with a bit of elegant design, but



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The suspension is shared with the Astra hatchback. Reducing this latest model's weight by up to 200kgs has had a significant effect on the way this car drives

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overall, the emphasis is on a stable, robust and safe stance, with the muscular rear-wheel arch contours and the divided rear light clusters adding to this impression. This latest generation Sports Tourer has the same dimensions as its predecessor, with a length of 4,702mm, a width of 1,871mm and a height of 1,499mm. Despite that, it offers much more space for passengers and luggage.

The driver can enjoy 26mm of additional headroom and passengers in the rear have 28mm more. The Sports Tourer's total cargo capacity is now 1,630-litres with the rear seat folded, this thanks to more efficient packaging.

At the wheel, the characteristic fascia

element is what Vauxhall refers to as a 'blade'-style panel that stretches right across the cabin trimmed in piano black with a neat chromed edging. Beautifully integrated into it is an IntelliLink infotainment screen, either 7 or 8-inches in size.

There's a price premium of around £1,000 for the Sports Tourer estate version over its five-door hatchback stablemate and that means you'll be paying from just over £16,500 to around £21,000 for mainstream versions.

At the affordable end of the petrol line-up, it's well worth trying to find the £700 premium Vauxhall asks to graduate from the entry-level 1.4-litre 100PS unit to the far more responsive and efficient three cylinder 1.0-litre powerplant.

Want a diesel? Well there are no duffers in the Astra black pump line-up any more – even the base 110PS 1.6-litre CDTi unit (priced from around £18,000) is impressive. Most buyers though, pay the necessary premium (around £700) to get themselves this engine in pokier 136PS guise.

Conventional automatic transmission is only available on the 150PS 1.4-litre petrol Turbo model or the 136PS version of the 1.6-litre CDTi diesel – for a premium of around £1,300 over the manual variant. However, at the bottom of the range, you can get a simpler 'Easytronic' set-up – essentially a manual gearbox without a clutch – on the 1.0-litre petrol engine for a premium of just £400.

Standard equipment across the range includes alloy wheels and an IntelliLink colour infotainment touchscreen compatible with the latest Apple CarPlay and Android Auto systems. We particularly like the 'OnStar' personal connectivity system that offers destination downloads, wi-fi access, vehicle tracking system and automatic accident emergency response.



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Magnificent Mazda CX-3



By Michael Weston

Mazda's compact CX-3 is an urban crossover that's reprising the success of its CX-5 big brother.

Mazda pulls out all the stops and condenses all the best bits of the gorgeous CX-5 into a smaller package. The CX-3 comes in front or all-wheel drive, and is offered with petrol or diesel power. It's light and it's good looking, with a chunky equipment list and reasonable pricing.

What more could you ask for? All too often, cars in this class look gawky, too stubby, too tall and too narrow. Somehow the CX-3 just looks right, thanks to its cab-back body and long bonnet proportioning. The predatory headlights are anything but cutesy and the coupe-like roofline gives it a real sporting stance.

Like most crossovers in this class, the CX-3 is offered with a choice of front or all-wheel drive chassis, and petrol and diesel engines. There are front-wheel drive models and the range-topping Sport Nav is all-wheel drive. The CX-3 is also offered with both manual and automatic transmissions.

Mazda's almost fanatical devotion to stripping unnecessary weight out of its cars means that although many of its cars look pretty substantial, they can weigh as much as a car in the next class down. This has all sorts of beneficial effects, not only in terms of vehicle dynamics but also when it comes to efficiency. Case in point: the CX-3 front-wheel drive diesel variant. With emissions of just 105g/km, this model has an official combined economy of 70.6mpg.

Mazda's compact CX-3 is an urban crossover that is reprising the success of its CX-5 big brother

When it comes to compact SUVs and crossovers, Mazda's CX-5 may very well be the best car of this kind you can buy, especially in revised form with slicker suspension.

The market's fastest growing segment right now is that for crossovers and compact soft-roading SUVs. If you want something that offers the best of both and offers the finest driving dynamics, the lowest running costs, the most space and arguably the best value in the class, then it's hard to ignore Mazda's improved CX-5. But try one and you might just think it to be the best.

The CX-5 is excellently packaged, has class-leading economy and emissions plus driving dynamics that set a new benchmark in this sector. Add in a high specification and competitive pricing and you've a compelling proposition, especially since recent suspension and refinement improvements.

As for off road prowess, this car has a set-up in which the torque is automatically split according to the terrain you're on, so it can direct 100% of drive to the front wheels in normal conditions, with up to 50% then directed to the rear wheels if slip is detected.

The Mazda CX-5 is the least expensive car to run in its segment as well as being the best equipped. It's yet another example of Mazda going its own way, doing things differently. Looking for a car of this kind?



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S&F ROOFING & GUTTERING Flat, Main roofs, rubber or felt, repaired and replaced, all repointing, Guttering repaired and replaced. BEAT ALL QUOTES GUARANTEED. Call Sean 01902 829158 8am to 6pm

ROOFING

main, flat, felt, firestone rubber, fibreglass, all repointing, fascias, soffits, gutters, Free quotes. All quotes beaten. 8am-5pm. 01902 722447.

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

rubbish removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed. Load/Remove any Waste. House Clearance. 07969 628382

skip hire

ClassifiedAds BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE

Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy!

It definitely works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL 01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

AN ABSOLUTE AFFORDABLE CASTLE SKIP HIRE

Mini, midi and large skips. Also available mini digger with driver. 01384 237577 01902 405745 07719 671845

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BLITZ SKIPS AFFORDABLE SKIPS 2-50 YARD SKIPS AVAILABLE MON-SAT 7AM-6PM 01902 870370 0121 517 1111

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service. 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR. Est 35 years. 01384 232359.

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE LTD. Mini, midi, maxi, large skips. Fast, friendly & reliable service. Monday to Saturday 6 day service. Call: 0121 555 6060.

STONES SKIP HIRE 0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875 www.stoneskiphire.co.uk

upholstery

UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pc/springs/caravans/pubs/club/antique. es. 01902 689844 / 07817 842980.

Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR RIFLES, SHOT GUNS, Antique guns, taxidermy- big bore guns, traps etc wanted. 07968 624202

HW95K 177 and 3-9 x 40 AO IR WA NS Panamax scope and 1 piece mount and gun bag, 1 year old, receipts, perfect condition, £320 ono. 07891 715354.

vets

Express & Star

THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.

So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.

2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.

3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BICHON FRISE cross Chihuahua (Chi-chons), adorable puppies, microchipped, flea and wormed to date, both parents can be seen. £400. 07572 687123.

EIGHT WEEK OLD Kittens weaned and litter trained £20. 01902 689992.

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS All neutered, inoculated and microchipped. Call 01922 412212 or www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk RGT Wolverhampton @RGTWolves

TWO COCK BUDGERIGARS in large cage with stand, £50 ono. Must collect. 01902 754015.

TWO BUGGIES in large cage with stand, £50 ono. Must collect. 01902 754015.

5 Business & Farming

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

commercial premises sale / let

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FOR SALE Ideal starter opportunity for upholstery / wooden frame making, sale includes complete set up, all stock, machinery, patterns, office equipment. Operating from a rented large two storey showroom / workroom on busy main road, Brierley Hill, West Midlands. £8,500 ono. Call 07432 149662.

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties: 0121 520 5318.

business directory

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES for Small Business. Competitive Rates. Call 01902 882600

6 Property

accommodation to let

A 3 BED HOUSE Wednesfield to let. A 2 bed house Parkfields to let. D53 OK. 01902 686903.

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

A MODERN two bed flat with garage, Coalway Road, Wolverhampton. 01902 686903.

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

FOUR BEDROOM HOUSE to let in Lower Gornal, Shops in Bliston, Walsall, Welshpool and Lower Gornal to let. 07801 746853.

FURNISHED 1 bed flat, Warslow, recent refurb, close to amenities, suit working couple/single. £400 pcm. 07969 104264.

HIGH QUALITY Furnished one bed flat, tettenhall area. No DSS 07976263435 / 01902 700 028.

SMART ROOMS in shared house. Netherton, from £85 pwk Single, £95 pwk DSS inc bills. No DSS. 07970 717139.

WILLENHALL, luxury room, furnished, working person, £57pw. Telephone 07401 082298.

BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL

01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

properties wanted

ClassifiedAds BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

IT WORKS FOR ME

We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL 01902 319 191 Brought to you by Express & Star

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish £££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££ Houses / Land Required

Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154 Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049 Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901

www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

A LOCAL BUYER pays full market value and more for your property. Call Rick 07729 297901

overseas property

HOUSE AND GITE BEAUFICEL, FRANCE House has two bedrooms and a ensuite and a large living room with open plan dining and kitchen area with a large log burner. Gite has open plan living room / kitchen and upstairs is a bedroom. £130,000. For more info e-mail steve -carol1@hotmail.co.uk.

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

STEEL SLITTING LINE OPERATOR - Kidderminster based steel stockholder requires the above due to expansion. Good rates of pay. Contact Chris Wright (Works Manager) on 01562 66815 to arrange interview

Would suit personnel who have experience on gas and water mains and general pipework.

Working on emergency repairs which will include overtime.

Tel 01384 298000 Email: sales@pressleakage.com

Working on emergency repairs which will include overtime.

Tel 01384 298000 Email: sales@pressleakage.com

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Tel 01384 298000 Email: sales@pressleakage.com

bar staff

EXPERIENCED BAR STAFF required due to newly refurbished restaurant, Tipton. 07417 451568.

engineering

FABRICATOR / WELDER required. Fabrication experience essential. Long established business. Brierley Hill area. 01384 76587.

TECHNICAL ENGINEER Office and site based. Experienced in pipe work and knowledge of Health & Safety, Environmental & Quality Systems an advantage. Full time position. Please apply by email to sales@pressleakage.com or call 01384 298000

hotel & catering

TRAINEE CHEF Required Nr Kingswinford also Barnard needed Navigation Pub 01384 273721

motor trade

HGV MECHANIC £13.30 p.h. plus overtime We are looking to recruit a self-motivated

42 Classified Ads

part time - general



NEWSBOYS GIRLS
Wanted for delivering copies of Express & Star in
NEWS DELIVERERS
needed in all areas of Kingswinford.
Please contact
Customer Services
on 0800 174 064.

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

SELLING YOUR CAR?

We have a package to suit every budget. Packages start from as little as

£21.00 for 6 nights Plus
6 nights free if you do not sell.

CALL
01902 317878

CITROEN C4 2-dr Coupe, 1.6 VTR, blue, 36,000 miles, FSH, MOT, good condition, £2,895 ono, 01902 317878, 07567 367731.

FORD FIESTA TITANIUM
New Shape, black, 5dr, 1.6, 09 reg, (Aug/09), 31k, MOT Nov 16, E/W, E/M, alloys, hands free blue tooth phone kit, FSH, perfect runner.
£4,750 ono
07528 372995.

FORD FOCUS Titanium, 1.6 TDCi, 2010, MOT March 24, 2017, 91,400 miles, any inspection, £3,450, 01902 317878, 07567 367731.

FORD FUSION 2
2005, 37,808 miles, silver blue, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, MOT, metallic paint, central locking, pas, stereo, CD, swb.
£1,995 ono
07970 592775.

MAZDA 6 TAKUYA 2012, 2.2 diesel sports style, 17,000 miles, 12 months MOT, half leather, immaculate, £9,500, 01384 632702.

PEUGEOT 207S HDI
3-dr hatchback, 1.6 diesel, grey, 58 reg, MOT November, 10 service stamps, 1 former owner, £30 tax, well looked after.
£2,195 ono
07949 90640.

RENAULT CLIO 12 Campus, met silver, 57 plate (reg 2008), long MOT, excellent condition through-out, £1,700 ono, 07971 368089.

SUZUKI ALTO 1000cc, auto, 2009, 20k miles, pensioners car, economical and reliable, any trial, £3,500, 01902 753545, 07800 837961.

VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN Twinport 1.6 petrol, 2006, 88,000 miles, 5-dr, blue, £1,825 ono, 07946 879532.

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.9 diesel energy, 2007, 7-seater, MOT Dec, metallic silver, tow bar, good condition, £2,095 ono, 07583 022011.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisers must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

BMW 325 TDS SE, auto, classic insurance, good condition, serviced, MOT'd 31/07/15 ono, 07864 842076.

CITROEN CX SX 1.3 5dr, 53 reg, red, only 61k, lady owner, MOT, as new condition, only £1,095, 07884 141632.

CITROEN PICASSO 2002, 2.0 HDI, MOT, 120k, Blue, E/W, PAS, drives well, new brakes, £495 ono 07950 812737.

FORD KA SPORT 04, full MOT, as new condition, leather interior, usual extras, silver £750 07919 566380.

PEUGEOT 206
1.24cc hatchback, petrol, 2002, 67,000 miles, lady owner, FSH, just had complete engine overhaul and service.
£850.
07802 202211 or
01902 342882.

PEUGEOT 206 Convertible, 1600, 52 plate, full MOT, very good condition, £850, 01384 251528 or 07972 169554.

PEUGEOT 307 1.6 petrol, SE, 06, black, 76,000 miles, very clean in/out, SW, AC, full MOT, 1 former keeper, £1,150, 07838 897643.

RENAULT SCENIC 51 plate, black, CD player, low mileage, 52K, 12 months MOT, £395, 01952 852151.

RENAULT SCENIC Dynamique, 51 plate, 84,558 miles, MOT till January 2017, silver, excellent condition, £850, 07968 905654.

ROVER 45 Impression, 14, 02, 12 months MOT, 64k, lovely condition throughout, well looked after, £550, 07733 437736.

SAAB 1999 silver, convertible, petrol, 6 months MOT, Alarm, PAS, CD, AC, low mileage, £950 ono, 07399 489303.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 2.2, 2003 plate, MOT end of October, lots of new parts, £725 ono, 07903 748933.

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.6 petrol, 12 months MOT, CD, front E/W, 7 seater, good condition, £800 ono, 07474 334353.

BMA Ext. Here 25 Years
20 Quality Cars
From £500
Full Mot's and Warranties
07956 988517
Dale Street, Bilston, WV14 7JY

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC CARS. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

BARGAIN VANS small / medium / large £595-£5995 inc vat 12mth MOT 01902 451877 / 07944 640999

FORD TRANSIT CONNECT 2006, red, long MOT, 15h, roof bars, £1,550, 07957 367731.

driving tuition

Drive All Seasons
Lessons Starting FROM
5 Lessons £50
10 Lessons £90
Manual & Automatic
Free Unlimited Theory
07517 845477
www.driveallseasons.co.uk

10 Hours £89! Five Hours £50!
2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered
ADDITIONAL REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10
01902 458100 / 01650 87005
01384 234954 / 0121 564009
01902 880605 www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

AMAZING OFFER 5 lessons £40, 10 lessons £80. £18 an hour there after. Call now 07558 051253.

motorbikes

TRIUMPH 955 DAYTONA Y reg, MOT'd, new battery, chain and sprockets, £1,800 ono, 07719 923101, After 7pm.

WE BUY BIKES immaculate, as new, garaged / non runners. Cash paid. Peter All Bikes, 01902 312939 bikessallspares@gmail.com

YAMAHA XT 660Z Tenery, 2008, low miles, many extra, excellent condition £3,500, 01902 741598.

YAMAHA XT 660Z Tenery, 2008, low miles, many extra, excellent condition £3,500, 01902 741598.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
TEL: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times.
MONMORE RD, WV1 2TZ

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE
WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611 Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549494, 01902 570705.

MAZDA MX5 CONVERTIBLE red, silver or grey, must be good condition, reasonable price. 01902 520406.

HAVE YOU CHEE'D your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

spares & accessories

accessories & services

TRAILER 4X3 With jockey wheel for sale, £140 ono, 07805 942308.

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE

30 yrs experience

ALL AREAS COVERED

Call Bob
01384 251328 or
07972 169554 anytime

For Example:
Citroen C1, C2, C3
Hyundai 110
Toyota Yaris
Clio's & Micras
Ring for quotes on others!

spares/parts

ROOF BOXES & BAR package deals from £149.95. Cheapest in Midlands. Wolves Hire, 01902 746723. Tettenhall Rd, WV6 0LE.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on
01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

general

BURIAL PLOT at Danescourt Cemetery, Tettenhall, W-ton, available with 65 year lease. £900 ono, 07949 529475 Mr Kyle.

WITHYMOOR COLTS
Charter Standard Community Status Club.
All Managers minimum FA Level 1 and CRC Checked. The following Teams are looking for Players:
U8's going to under U9's require experienced **OUTFIELD PLAYERS.** Call Simon 07912 965503.
U11's going to U12's require experienced **OUTFIELD PLAYERS**
Call Robbie 07903 341476
U15's Girls going to U16's require experienced **OUTFIELD PLAYERS**
Call Sean 07935 464079.

SEDGLEY WHITE LIONS
Are looking for players to go into Under 9's, currently school year 3 going into 4, 7 a side next season 2016/17.
Preferably already played for a team, however not essential.
Call
Ste Fellows 07476 378581.
smfellows2003@yahoo.co.uk

WENDY, mature, passionate ladylike divorcee seeks no strings casual friendship/fun with gent any age. Tel: 0906 515 3023 3035 Box 421605

JACKIE, 49, dark hair, green eyes, cuddly build, likes going out, gym, reading, looking for an honest gentleman for friendship/possible relationship. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422257

JESSIE, sophisticated, well educated, brunette lady, 38yrs, WLTm man of any age for discreet chats, meetings and more. Age/looks unimportant must have SOH. Box 4107857

FEMALE, looking for an honest, caring, easygoing male. I am divorced and like walks, going for meals, cinema and low dogs. Text only Mailbox: 4539974

CAROLINE, bored housewife 42, seeking a little excitement. Are you 30+ and discreet, if so ping me a text and give me a few details. Box: 4078682

TINA, 43, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meat out, holidays, WLTm someone to share interests and quality time. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422329

MIKE, 64, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meat out, holidays, WLTm someone to share interests and quality time. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422329

PAUL 65yrs, Mobility probs but very caring looking for caring lady 60/70 for friendship and possible LTR. Text only Mailbox: 5456394

DAVID, 58, single, looking for a female partner for friendship and company, maybe more. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422179

ADVENTUROUS 35yr old, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235

WHITE male 58, looking for large built Indian or Black woman for no strings adult fun. Text only Mailbox: 4223520

personal

ADULT CINEMA. The Foxy Lady 01902 490898. Gentlemen, Dance Bar opening soon! 01902 405522.

GENTLEMAN SFT 5INS
74 years of age wishes to meet lady 50-75 for Friendship, possible relationship.
Photo appreciated and returned.
Box Number P20358
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

MALE, 60
Very sincere, easy going and loving, WLTm female for friendship or relationship.
Box Number P20357
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

6FT TALL, 54 YEAR OLD SLIMISH, REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE MALE
Wicked sense of humour, young outlook, own teeth and hair.
Looking for a genuine, slim, single female, for hopefully a genuine LTR.
Box Number P20356
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1ES.

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for daytime distractions, ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 421657

FEMALE, 67, young looking widow, 5ft2, green eyes, likes meals out, holidays, reading, WLTm gentleman of similar age, or older. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422393

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasted. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422459

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box: 420237

EMMA 56, active and always on the go, seeks fit, active, country loving guy who shares passion for the outdoors. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422443

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

KATHY, 45, curvy blonde seeking reliable honest man who can get me out of this rut I am in, open to new ideas and looking for someone special! Give me a try. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422263

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTm for more than just friendship with similar chilled, kind, easygoing guy. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422267

WENDY, mature, passionate ladylike divorcee seeks no strings casual friendship/fun with gent any age. Tel: 0906 515 3023 3035 Box 421605

JACKIE, 49, dark hair, green eyes, cuddly build, likes going out, gym, reading, looking for an honest gentleman for friendship/possible relationship. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422257

JESSIE, sophisticated, well educated, brunette lady, 38yrs, WLTm man of any age for discreet chats, meetings and more. Age/looks unimportant must have SOH. Box 4107857

FEMALE, looking for an honest, caring, easygoing male. I am divorced and like walks, going for meals, cinema and low dogs. Text only Mailbox: 4539974

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PAUL 65yrs, Mobility probs but very caring looking for caring lady 60/70 for friendship and possible LTR. Text only Mailbox: 5456394

DAVID, 58, single, looking for a female partner for friendship and company, maybe more. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422179

ADVENTUROUS 35yr old, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235

WHITE male 58, looking for large built Indian or Black woman for no strings adult fun. Text only Mailbox: 4223520

MIXED Race Male, smart, educated, looking for lady 35/64, for discreet relationship. Text only Mailbox: 5462541

DAVE, blue eyes, 5ft 11, looking for love. Only genuine replies. Text only Mailbox: 5457564

COLIN 48, kind loving, seeks cuddly large full figured kind loving lady 50 to 60 for LTR, love, kisses, cuddling, healing heart to heart. Text only Mailbox: 5439562

ANDREW 53, widower, honest, genuine, loving, tactile hoping for love again. Text only Mailbox: 5449242

ANDY, young looking 49, 5ft5, slim build, from West Bromwich, likes films, socialising, looking for a lady 50 to 60 for LTR, good times/possible LTR. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421783

ALWAYS loved it and want to experience an older man, who would love to meet a genuine lady to spoil and pamper. Box: 4138405

DAVE, 65, slim, white male, Birmingham area, easygoing, likes music, country pubs, animals, WLTm petite, easygoing, white female, for LTR friendship/relationship, if this is you get in touch. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422395

SHAUN, 49, 5ft10, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, GSOH, OHAC, honest, romantic, animal lover, likes country pubs, wine, going to the animal and countryside, looking for somebody who is down to earth and fun loving. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396440

18+ and you want to be taught? Teacher glad to teach you, older, experienced guy, gentle and tender. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422203

WIDOWED OAP 82, WLTm lady any age for genuine companionship, togetherness, holidays and more. Can travel or accommodate. Text only Mailbox: 4625673

MIKE, 64, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meat out, holidays, WLTm someone to share interests and quality time. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422329

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Express & Star DATING

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To Place your advert call:
0844 381 5936 Simply text REG followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 150 characters) and send to 0906. FREE standard network reply.

YOU can now Date ONLINE or use your mobile just visit:
http://dating.expressandstar.com

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet you... visit... **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

LUCY 37yrs 5ft 11ins brunette, loves nightlife, socialising, having fun, looking for fun guy who can make me laugh and provides a good time. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422455

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

BARBARA, 49, attractive green-eyed blonde, OHAC, likes travel, cinema, meals out etc. looking for genuine caring male up to 65yr for possible LTR. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422439

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasted. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422459



Junior players with Penn Golf Club professional Adam Robinson



The Penn Golf Club shop



Penn Golf Club senior players with the club captain Alex Haynes



Young hopeful Dan Porter makes a putt

Club in the swing for National Golf Month

PENN Golf Club has teed off for a busy month of action with a wide series of events.

The well-appointed club that spreads out across the scenic Penn Common will have one eye of the future when it stages the Wolverhampton and Dudley Primary Schools Putting Championships throughout the summer term.

Families can also get into the swing of things on Bank Holiday Monday, May 30 with a Family Putting Challenge from 2-7pm, with golf and family meal-deal vouchers up for grabs. It is open to non-club members.

The club is also hosting two prestigious individual events, with 84 players from all over the country taking part in the Inaugural American Golf Seniors Championship. The top three pairs will qualify for the national final at The Belfry later in the year.

Progress

To conclude National Golf Month, Penn will be the host venue for the England Golf Midland Region Ladies Final Medal on Sunday.

A field of 120 players from across the Midlands will tee off in an 18-hole stroke play competition. The top 10 progress to Grand Medal Final Week in August.

The packed schedule will add to secretary Mick Woodhouse's increasing workload but he is more than happy to help the club build towards a bright future.

Woodhouse is especially keen to increase the number of youngsters at the club and has forged a partnership with numerous schools across Wolverhampton that sees him and the club's qualified PGA coaches run sessions.

"Golf clubs going out to put sessions on at schools is quite a unique thing," said Woodhouse, who will be teeing off in the Seniors Championship on Friday.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"We are trying to attract young members and any budding golfers can come along and join our academy."

"We go to quite a lot of schools across the Wolverhampton area and we are planning something similar in Dudley," Whitehouse added.

"We deliver sessions and it's really enjoyable. The Tri Golf is very popular because it caters for players of all abilities.

"We are trying to attract young members to the club and any budding golfers can come along and join our academy."

The academy offers a pathway from beginner to professional under the guidance of academy director and club professional Mark Butler and junior organiser Adam Robinson.

"Mark Butler is our club professional and he runs the Mark Butler Golf Academy at Sedgley," added Woodhouse.

"The youngsters can go there and have some sessions with Mark and then hopefully join our club."

"That's the pathway we are trying to create."

One of Penn's former juniors, James Willis, is flying the flag for the club on the professional scene.

"James Willis started as a junior here and he has just turned professional," said Woodhouse.

"James is from Sedgley and he used to play county

golf for Staffordshire and got a scholarship in America. That's an example of the pathway open to young players.

"A lot of our members started off as juniors here, and some have gone on to be captain of the club."

Eight-handicapper Woodhouse was a keen cricketer with Wightwick before catching the golfing bug.

He has been a member at Penn since 1988 and, along with a hard-working committee, is determined to drive the club forward in what is a competitive business.

"We are trying to look after the club's future," he said.

"Forging links with locals schools is an important step while it's great for the club to be staging the American Golf Seniors Championship and the England Golf Midland Region Ladies Final Medal.

Stable

"Staging events such as those is testament to the quality of our course and helps raise the club's profile.

"We have a membership of around 500.

"We are doing okay. We are stable and that's not a bad position in today's market because it's very competitive.

"It's a lovely environment here and we are also planning to refurbish the club."

"We have a very good committee here and we are moving in the right direction."

The schools and family putting competitions are sponsored and supported by The Golf Foundation so there is no charge for instruction or entry into the competitions.

They are open to school Years 4, 5 and 6 and schools can take up to 15 pupils per event.

Any schools or families wishing to enter and take part in the competitions can do so by contacting the club on 01902 341142 or e-mail secretary@penngolf-club.co.uk

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Sport

Club putts on host of events to mark National Golf Month

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Boost for the Glassboys as trio sign on

GOALKEEPER Matt Gould and attacking midfielder Chris Lait have signed new contracts at Stourbridge FC.

The duo have put pen to paper on new deals at Ambelcote until the end of the 2016/17 season, following in the footsteps of central defender Dan Scarr who is already contracted to the club for the new campaign.

Lait, who joined from Rushall Olympic in March 2014, was the Glassboys' joint second highest scorer last season with 16 goals, including stunning strikes in the FA Cup wins against Kidderminster Harriers and Dover Athletic.

Gould signed for Stourbridge on loan from Scottish Championship side Livingston in January and played 21 times, proving to be a solid presence behind the back four as Stourbridge pushed towards the play-offs.

Meanwhile, Stourbridge have also have confirmed their season ticket and matchday admission prices for 2016/17. These are as follows: Adults £10, senior citizens and 17-18-year-olds £7, 11-16-year-olds £3, accompanied under-11s free.

An adult's full season ticket costs £170, £100 for senior citizens and 17-18-year-olds and £50 for 11-to-16s.

All children under 11 will be admitted free as long as they are accompanied by a paying adult or season ticket holder.

Flexi-season tickets will also be available. These comprise 12 numbered vouchers that can be used at any home league game. The vouchers are not restricted to the season ticket holder and can be used to allow entry for any person to any home league game.

An application form can be downloaded from the club's website www.stourbridgefc.com. Season tickets can be applied for by post, and will be on sale at the club from Thursday, June 2 from 7pm onwards.

Duathlon prizes for Black Country club youngsters

BLACK Country Triathletes' junior section came home with a number of medals from a duathlon at Stourport Sports Club. More than 120 children, aged from seven to 16, took part.

Ella Harris took third in the girls Tristar age group, Abigail Kennard came second in the girls Tristar 2 category, Ollie Mason and Joel Humpage were first and third respectively in the boys Tristar 3 age group, with Holly Lewis second and Daisy Briscoe third in the girls Youth category. Recce Ashfield was first in the boys Youth age group.

Jacob Anson finished second overall and second in age group at the Nuneaton Aquathlon.

Keith Bate won bronze in his age group at the British Sprint Triathlon Championships at Emberton Country Park, while Steve Blakemore finished as 1st Vet in the Phoenix Sprint Triathlon at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire. They will both represent Great Britain in the age group standard and sprint distance races at the European Duathlon Championships in Lisbon this weekend.

Fighters claim European medal haul



Pride gym kickboxing medallists

TEENAGE fighter Reuben Charlesworth boxed to his fourth consecutive win – and then followed up with a kickboxing gold.

The 18-year-old, from Lower Gornal is unbeaten as a boxer, and maintained his record with a second round stoppage against Jake Hudson from the Fight Den in Birmingham.

Charlesworth, who trains at Pride boxing gym in Halesowen, under the guidance of his father Jason, gained further success at the ICO Kickboxing European championships in Rome.

Seven participants came back with medals, with golds going to Charlesworth in the 18-years

Boxing

category, Liberty Smith in the 16s, Finlay Wright in the 15-years section, Tyler Cox for 12-year-olds and Luke Ashby for the aged nines. Connor Preece in the 17s and Kiya Charlesworth, 12-years, returned with silvers.

Head coach Jason Charlesworth, a 6th Dan said: "All of our fighters did our school and country proud. There was plenty of talent on show."

These, and other fighters from the Halesowen martial arts centre, will travel to France for the world championships in October.

HEATHENS SHUT OUT THE STORM

CRADLEY battled their way back to joint top of the National League with a 52-38 win over Coventry Storm.

The Motor Market Heathens finished strongly to maintain their unbeaten record at Monmore Green on Monday.

Ashley Morris got the Heathens' night off to a flyer as he beat the Monmore National League track record in the first heat with a time of 55.31.

The Storm took the lead with a 5-1 in heat three but the Heathens then failed to concede a further heat advantage for the rest of the night.

A maximum heat advantage from Morris and Ben Basford in the sixth proved vital, while heat nine saw James Purchase caught out in second by Storm duo Ryan Terry-Daley and Callum Walker and relegated to the back.

But the Heathens finished off in style as Ashley Morris and Max Clegg both secured two 5-1s in three heats. Heathens head to Eastbourne in the league on Saturday and then to Buxton in the cup on Sunday. The next home meeting is the second leg of their cup tie with the Hitmen on Monday June 13.

Cradley 52: Max Clegg 16+2, Ashley Morris 15, Luke Chessell 9, James Purchase 7, Ben Basford 4+2, Bradley Andrews 1, Jack Kingston R/R.

Coventry 38: Dan Greenwood 11, Martin Knuckey 9+2, Conor Dwyer 7+4, Ryan Terry-Daley 7, Callum Walker 4+2, Kyle Roberts 0, Liam Carr R/R.

Meanwhile, Cradley chiefs say their showpiece individual event of the year has all the makings of being the best of the modern era.

The Dudley Stroke Association Golden Hammer has been arranged for Tuesday, August 9 at Monmore and the club are planning added attractions for children along with free admission.

Reigning champion Adam Ellis will defend his title with new sensation Dan Bewley also included, while Tom Perry, Paul Starke, Steve Worrall, Nathan Greaves and Matt Williamson will all return to Monmore after enjoying glittering spells in the green, red and white.

Admission is £15 adults, £12 concessions, free for children. Season ticket holders can attend for just £5 on production of their pass.

Confirmed riders are Ashley Morris, Luke Chessell, Max Clegg, Tom Perry, Adam Roynon, Paul Starke, Steve Worrall, Nathan Greaves, Matt Williamson, Lee Smart, Ben Morley, Dan Bewley, Adam Ellis and Simon Lambert.

Bell sounds on Aston title bid



Craig Cunningham, left, strikes a blow against Dudley's Ryan Aston

DUDLEY'S Ryan Aston came off second best as he was knocked out by defending Midlands middleweight champion Craig Cunningham just seconds before the end of the sixth round.

The 10-round contest was the headline bout at promoter Paul 'PJ' Rowson's 'Resurgence' show at Dudley Town Hall on Saturday night.

Hometown hero Aston was attempting to claim a bonafide belt for the fourth time, in this third Midlands title shot.

Brummie Cunningham, aged 28, who lives in Oldbury, was putting the strap up-for-grabs for the first time and now plans to drop down to light middle. A quarter of well-matched four round bouts supported the main event.

Rowley Regis' Tyler Denny drew for the second successive bout in a tough super middleweight bout against Devon-born Spaniard Cristian Hoskin-Gomez.

Netherton's Les Byfield had his hand raised by a 40-38 victory over Swindon's Joe Beeden, his fifth straight victory.

Boxing's only professional poet, Matt Windle, opened the show with his first points shut out in his third professional contest. The unbeaten Brummie overcame the game Gary Reeve by a 40-35 margin.

The last under-card bout saw Lichfield's Brad Foster outpoint Jordan Turner, of Nottinghamshire, at flyweight.

Doherty the star turn at presentation

STOURBRIDGE A, winners for the last two seasons, progressed to the final of the Stourbridge Snooker League Inter-League against a strong Kidderminster side. They now face Evesham.

Leigh Bennett & Sam Porter of King-swinford Cons beat Gavin Sloan & Carl Southwick of West Midlands Police over two frames in the pairs handicap final at Stourbridge Old Edwardian Club.

League president Mike Pritchard presented Bennett and Porter with the Geoff Williams Memorial Shield, now in its 26th year.

In the final of the Worcester Inter-League over 40s at Stourbridge Old Edwardian Club, Stourbridge beat Evesham by 644 to 450. All ten frames were played on the same evening, and Stourbridge, who had won the title in six consecutive years until they lost to Evesham in 2015, exacted revenge.

The late John Smith, who died suddenly last July, had been secretary and the driving force behind these inter-league competitions, and would have been delighted that the events continued, with thanks to the initiative of Dean Powell.

There was a good attendance for the presentation of League and Knock-Out trophies and prizes, with the added bonus of 1997 world champion Ken Doherty on hand to make the awards. He was also at the club playing an exhibition later that evening.

Doherty took on a number of those who had won prizes and also treated the audience to stories about many of the ex-players from years gone by and those who now share the commentary box with him.

The Irishman, the only world amateur champion to have become the world professional champion, posed for photographs with all proceeds to go to local charities.

Anyone for tennis? It's free for children

FREE tennis is on offer for children in Tipton this summer thanks to the success of the Great Britain team at the Davis Cup.

Youngsters aged up to eight years will be able to sign up for a free place on a six-week block of mini-tennis coaching at Tipton Sports Academy from June onwards.

Sandwell Leisure Trust's Sport Development & Physical Activity team applied for the funding from The Lawn Tennis Association's Davis Cup Legacy Programme.

For more information visit www.sl-leisure.co.uk or call 0121 506 4980.

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